

Ransom Slavery along the Ottoman Borders

(EARLY FIFTEENTH - EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES)



EDITED BY

GÉZA DÁVID AND PÁL FODOR

BRILL THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND ITS HERITAGE

Ransom Slavery along the Ottoman Borders

The Ottoman Empire and its Heritage

Politics, Society and Economy

EDITORS BY

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PREFACE

In the preface to an earlier volume compiled by us (*Ottomans, Hungarians, and Habsburgs in Central Europe. The Military Confines in the Era of Ottoman Conquest*. The Ottoman Empire and Its Heritage, 20. Leiden: Brill, 2000), we announced that as part of a project launched at the Institute of History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences we were putting together another volume, this time on the subject of ransom slavery along the Ottoman borders. It gives us great pleasure to report that this new collection is now ready and will join its predecessor in the series “The Ottoman Empire and Its Heritage”. This indicates that the editors wish to maintain a balance among the different schools of research, and that they appreciate the new findings in Hungary concerning the Ottoman period.

As on the previous occasion, efforts have been made to avoid the one-sidedness that results from speaking only about areas under Ottoman control in the strict sense of the word and from including solely those authors who use Turkish and Crimean Tatar sources. Instead, scholars of Habsburg–Hungarian history, relying on different archival materials, were also asked to contribute. It should be emphasised that this two-sided, complex, approach is a Hungarian speciality that stems from the merely partial conquest of the country by the Ottomans and from the abundance of written records here. A similar, but less marked, duality characterised the situation in some other European territories. Finally, although the degree of dividedness in certain other regions was comparable, depiction of the two sides there is difficult, since autochthonous archival material is scarce.

As the Introduction makes clear, the question of captives and slaves has been in the focus of attention in recent years, without, however, being fully explored. Probably the most intriguing question is the number of people whose lives were changed by the fact that they had to spend long years in captivity. There is no hope to correctly answer this question, since no systematic documentation was prepared concerning the individuals involved. The Ottoman treasury could, apparently, not enforce its claim to collect the “one-fifth tax” (*pencik*), which in any case did not even theoretically extend to the totality of captives over the whole period.

Nevertheless, by assembling scattered data, the scale of the tax levied or collected will perhaps be gauged sooner or later. This would help us to judge the accuracy of contemporary or modern figures that speak of hundreds of thousands of captives.

In this matter the present volume cannot offer orientation, even if it does suggest, and convincingly, that the ransoming of slaves was a widespread activity, a species of trade in the period under consideration. It contains much information on the techniques for taking captives and on the procedures for extracting money and goods from them, their families and their communities.

Here we should like to express our gratitude to Suraiya Faroqhi, who encouraged us with a short but decisive sentence confirming her interest in the topic. Additional motivation came from Brill's Trudy Kamperveen, the ideal editor, who supplied the necessary reminders always well in time and invariably with humour and goodwill. We also wish to thank colleagues for their readiness to contribute to the book and for their patience during the editorial process. We are especially indebted to Ferenc Glatz, the director of the Institute of History, for providing the conditions for our work (nine out of the twelve contributors to the book were or had been on its staff) and to the National Foundation for Scientific Research (Hungary's central academic funding body) for granting our project the necessary financial support. Also, we should like to thank Éva Figder, Veronika K. Fodor, Andrew Gane, Tamás Pálosfalvi, Judit Pokoly, Chris Sullivan, and Albert Vermes for their linguistic assistance.

During our editorial work we suffered grievous losses when two colleagues and friends, Ferenc Szakály and István György Tóth, passed away, leaving an aching void. We dedicate this book to their memory.

Géza Dávid

Pál Fodor

ABBREVIATIONS

APF	Archivio Storico della Sacra Congregazione de Propaganda Fide, Roma
BHStA	Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, München
BOA	Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, İstanbul
DF	MOL Diplomatikai Fényképgyűjtemény, Budapest
DL	MOL Diplomatikai Levéltár, Budapest
HHStA	Haus, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Wien
HL	Hadtörténelmi Levéltár, Budapest
KA	Kriegsarchiv
MAD	Maliyeden Müdevver Defterler, BOA, İstanbul
MD	Mühimme Defterleri, BOA, İstanbul
MKA	Magyar Kamara Archivuma, Budapest
MOL	Magyar Országos Levéltár, Budapest
MTA	Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, Budapest
ÖNB	Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Wien
ÖStA	Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Wien
T SMA	Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Arşivi, İstanbul
TSMK	Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, İstanbul

INTRODUCTION

Slavery is one of the most permanent phenomena of human history. With the exception of the past two centuries, the subjugation, deprivation and use of human beings as tools was considered natural and was widely accepted. This applied to the ancient societies of Europe, but also to many medieval and early modern worlds including Islamdom.¹ Slavery was part of everyday life in early Islamic history, and its importance grew as the Muslims conquered the territories of ancient Middle Eastern civilisations one after the other.

However, Islamic slavery was different from that current in the ancient world.² Muslim owners employed slaves as eunuchs, guards, concubines or domestic servants primarily in order to ensure their own comfort, to protect their homes or palaces and to keep the latter tidy. Acting on behalf of their masters, these ‘domestic slaves’ often occupied important positions in trade, and quite a few participated in cultural life; most of the singers, dancers, musicians and actors that we know of were servile status. As time went on, the military use of slaves also grew in importance. From the age of the Abbasid caliphs into modern times, the main support of many Islamic states was provided by slave soldiers of foreign origin trained for the service of the ruler. What is more, in some cases (in the Ghaznavid and Mamluk empires and in certain periods of Ottoman rule as well) they gained control of the political sphere in its entirety.

¹For the survival of European slavery into modern times see, for instance, Salvatore Bono, *Schiavi musulmani nell'Italia moderna. Galeotti, vu' cumpra', domestici*. Napoli, 1999. Cf. Sally McKee, “Inherited Status and Slavery in Late Medieval Italy and Venetian Crete,” *Past and Present* 182 (February 2004) 31–53, with a selected list of recent works on the subject (pp. 31–31: notes 1–3).

²For slavery in the Islamic world, see R. Brunschvig, “‘Abd,” in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*. II. Leiden, London, 1960, 24–40. Hans Müller, “Sklaven,” in *Wirtschaftsgeschichte des Vorderen Orients in islamischer Zeit*. Teil 1. Leiden, Köln, 1977, 53–83. M. Akif Aydın – Muhammed Hamîdullah, “Köle,” in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*. 26. Ankara, 2002, 237–246. Murray Gordon, *Slavery in the Arab World*. New York, 1989. Bernard Lewis, *Race and Slavery in the Middle East. An Historical Enquiry*. New York, Oxford, 1990.

Due to, at least in part, the tenets of the Muslim religion, slaves in Islamic societies generally were in a better situation than the slaves of earlier ages. According to Islamic religious law, the natural human state is freedom, and, apart from well-defined cases, it is forbidden to enslave human beings. Thus for example a Muslim of whatever condition cannot be enslaved, a free man cannot fall into servitude because of debt, and he cannot sell himself into slavery. Furthermore if a person cannot be proven to be a slave unequivocally, he must be considered free. A slave under Islam is not mere movable property, but a human being with certain, albeit very limited, rights. Thus for example, judges could call upon a slave owner to account for bad treatment meted out, and in well-founded cases of abuse, a slave could be freed contrary to his master's will. The manumission of slaves and the facilitating of their emancipation (by way of contracts and so on) were regarded as good deeds in religious law, contributing to the alleviation of sins the benefactor might have committed.

On the other hand, slaves' lives were made more bearable by the peculiarities of Muslim social development. As different layers of society – especially the militarised governing apparatuses – absorbed slaves in huge numbers, the borderline between free men and slaves was gradually blurred, or, more precisely, lost its significance (to such an extent that, for example, in the Ottoman state even dignitaries who were legally slaves could hold slaves themselves). As a result, social views about slaves became more favourable, and the attitude towards them more tolerant than in other civilisations.

The alleviations provided by Islam made it difficult for prospective owners to supply themselves with slaves from domestic sources. Due to the immense number of emancipations and the provision of *zimma* or legal protection to the infidels of the realm, the pool of people that lawfully could be enslaved was very limited. As a consequence, when in any particular empire, the time of great conquests came to an end and prisoners of war were no longer abundant, the demand for slaves first and foremost was satisfied by purchasing. Initially, most slaves in the Islamic world came from among Central and East European Slavs, then from the various peoples of the Eurasian steppe and Africa.

With the advent of the Ottomans, traditional forms of acquiring slaves came into the forefront once again, primarily the kidnapping of the Christian populations of the Balkans and Central Europe. The endless wars provided a continuous supply of slaves, encouraging society and the state

to employ slave labour in a variety of occupations. Georgius de Hungaria, a captive in the Empire for twenty years in the mid-fifteenth century, wrote that “in whole of Turkey all share the view that someone who manages to acquire a male or female slave will never know destitution again”.³

At the same time, the demand for slaves created a widespread and well-organised slave trade, several elements of which the Ottomans adopted from their predecessors or trading partners (Byzantium, Venice, Genoa, Egypt).⁴ No town of note lacked a slave market of some kind. In the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries the bulk of slaves arrived in the Ottoman lands from four regions. People from the Black Sea coasts were brought in as Ottoman merchants continued the famous Tatar slave trade, while slaves from the Mediterranean basin typically were often victims of piracy. Constant wars and raids on the Balkan frontier and later in Hungary legitimised the enslavement of large numbers of men, women and children. Finally slaves were brought in from black Africa via the sub-Saharan trade routes. The main markets, or rather distribution centres, operated in the towns of the Crimean peninsula, primarily in Caffa, from where slaves were transported overland and by boat to the markets of Istanbul and the Middle Eastern towns. According to Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha, in 1526–27 this trade brought a profit of 30,000 ducats at the customs offices of Kilia and Caffa alone.⁵

³Georgius de Hungaria, “*Incipit prohemium in tractatum de moribus, conditionibus et nequicia Turcorum*”. *Értekezés a törökök szokásairól, viszonyairól és gonoszságáról 1438–1458*. Hungarian translation by Győző Kenéz in *Rabok, követek, kalmárok az oszmán birodalomról* [Slaves, Envoys and Merchants on the Ottoman Empire]. Published by Lajos Tardy. Budapest, 1977, 69.

⁴Cf. e.g. Michel Balard, “Esclavage en Crimée et sources fiscales génoises au XV^e siècle,” *Byzantinische Forschungen* 22 (1996) 9–17. Kate Fleet, *European and Islamic Trade in the Early Ottoman State*. Cambridge, 1999, 37–58.

⁵*Két tárgyalás Sztambulban. Hyeronimus Łaski tárgyalása a töröknél János király nevében. Habardanecz János jelentése 1528 nyári sztambuli tárgyalásairól* [Two Sets of Negotiations in Istanbul. The Talks of Hyeronimus Łaski with the Turks in the Name of King John. The Report of Johannes Habardanecz on the Negotiations in Istanbul in the Summer of 1528]. Published by Gábor Barta. Introduction and notes by Gábor Barta – Pál Fodor. Translated by Gábor Barta – József Kun. Budapest, 1996, 138. For the Crimean slave trade, see the article by Mária Ivanics in the present volume and the literature quoted by her.

The Ottomans used a number of terms to designate their slaves: *kul*, *abd*, *abd-i memluk*, *gulam*, *bende*, *rakik*, *halayık*, and so forth for the masculine, and *cariye*, *karavaş*, *eme*, *memluke*, *rakika*, and so on for the feminine. Prisoners of war and captives for ransom (*fidye*, *baha*) were called *esir/tutsak* (in the case of women *seby*). Neither in law nor in actuality was the *esir* a slave⁶ but could easily become one if he or she was not sufficiently valuable to warrant a ransom demand, or if he or she could not raise the sum required. This book is first and foremost about the *esirs* and the circumstances of their captivity (*esaret*), about people who had already taken the first step on the road to slavery proper (*rik*, *rikkiyet*).

Fortunately, research into Ottoman slavery has witnessed a considerable upturn over the past thirty years. Although no monograph of good quality has yet appeared on the ‘golden age’ (fourteenth–seventeenth centuries),⁷ several more limited studies and relevant source materials have been published. Initially attention had focussed on military slavery and the legal problems associated with it, for example the circumstances surrounding the introduction and legality of the so-called ‘one-fifth tax’ (*pencik*) that the Ottoman ruler collected from all those who imported slaves into his realm. Other topics of research include the collection (*devşirme*) of non-Muslim youths, or else the legal and social status of that part of the élite that was of slave origin.⁸ Later on, themes became

⁶The importance of this distinction was also stressed by the famous Ottoman chief jurisconsult Ebussuud, see Mehmet Ertoğrul Düzdağ, *Şeyhülislam Ebussuûd Efendi fetvaları ışığında 16. asır Türk hayatı*. İstanbul, 1972, 108: No. 477.

⁷Nihat Engin’s book (*Osmanlı devletinde kölelik*. [Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Vakfı Yayınları, 158.] İstanbul, 1998) is, alas, not up to the standard one might expect from a general overview. However, the first two chapters of the monograph on nineteenth century slavery by Y. Hakan Erdem are very useful: *Slavery in the Ottoman Empire and its Demise, 1800–1909*. Oxford, 1996, 18–42. By contrast, the nineteenth century and especially the years before the abolition of slavery have received a measure of attention; cf. Ehud R. Toledano, *The Ottoman Slave Trade and its Suppression: 1840–1890*. Princeton, 1982. Idem, *Slavery and Abolition in the Ottoman Middle East*. Seattle, London, 1998.

⁸See, for example, V. L. Ménage, “Some Notes on the Devşirme,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 29 (1966) 64–78. Cvetana Georgieva, “Certains problèmes de la structure sociale de l’Empire ottoman aux XIV^e–XVI^e siècles (Par rapport au système „kul”),” *Bulgarian Historical Review* 1974/2, 45–57. İbrahim Metin Kunt, “Kulların kulları,” *Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Dergisi. Hümaniter Bilimler* 3 (1975) 27–41. Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr, “En marge d’un acte concernant le penğyek et les aqıngı,”

more varied and the sources used were extended; it is sufficient to refer to the increasingly intensive exploitation of the so-called law court records during the past few decades. As a result, we are much better informed on such previously neglected areas as the slave trade, slave markets and the taxation of slave imports;⁹ the price of slaves,¹⁰ their ethnic composition in various localities and the special guidebooks meant to facilitate the job of the prospective slave buyer;¹¹ the particular problems of black slaves;¹² the legal aspects of slavery and the forms of emancipation (voluntary and contractual, and so forth);¹³ the treatment and fate of fugitive

Revue des Études Islamiques 37 (1969) 21–47. Cf. Vassilis Demetriades, “Some Thoughts on the Origins of the *devşirme*,” in *The Ottoman Emirate (1300–1389)*. Ed. by Elizabeth Zachariadou. Rethymnon, 1993, 23–33. Cf. Erdem, *op. cit.*, 1–11.

⁹Alan W. Fisher, “The Sale of Slaves in the Ottoman Empire: Markets and State Taxes on Slave Sales, Some Preliminary Considerations,” *Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Dergisi* 6 (1978) 149–174. Idem, “Chattel Slavery in the Ottoman Empire,” *Slavery Abolition – A Journal of Comparative Studies* 1:1 (1980) 26–35. Halil İnalçık, “Servile Labor in the Ottoman Empire,” in *The Mutual Effects of the Islamic and Judeo-Christian Worlds: The East European Pattern*. (Studies on Society in Change, 3.) Ed. by A. Asher – T. Halasi-Kun – B. K. Király. Brooklyn, N. Y., 1979, 35–40. Halil Sahillioğlu, “Slaves in the Social and Economic Life of Bursa in the Late 15th and Early 16th Centuries,” *Turcica* 17 (1985) 63–82. Erdem, *op. cit.*, 18–19, 33–42. Suraiya Faroqhi, “Quis Custodiet Custodes? Controlling Slave Identities and Slave Traders in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Istanbul,” in *Frontiers of Faith. Religious Exchange and the Constitution of Religious Identities 1400–1750*. Ed. by Eszter Andor – István György Tóth. Budapest, 2001, 121–136.

¹⁰İnalçık, *op. cit.*, 43–45, 52. Sahillioğlu, *op. cit.*, 90–97. İzzet Sak, “Konya’da köleler (16. yüzyıl sonu – 17. yüzyıl),” *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 9 (1989) 169–175. Yvonne J. Seng, “Fugitives and Factotums: Slavery in Early Sixteenth-Century Istanbul,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 39:2 (1996) 142–147, 155–156.

¹¹Hans Müller, *Die Kunst des Sklavenkaufs nach arabischen, persischen und türkischen Ratgebers vom 10. bis 18. Jahrhundert*. (Islamkundliche Untersuchungen, 57.) Freiburg, 1980, esp. 181–187. Fisher, “Chattel Slavery,” 40–41.

¹²Ronald C. Jennings, “Black Slaves and Free Blacks in Ottoman Cyprus, 1590–1640,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 30 (1987) 286–302. Suraiya Faroqhi, “Black Slaves and Freedmen Celebrating (Aydın, 1576),” *Turcica* 21–23 (1991) 205–215.

¹³Sahillioğlu, *op. cit.*, 51–62. Sak, *op. cit.*, 179–193, 196–197. Ahmed Akgündüz, *İslam hukukunda kölelik-câriyelik müessesesi ve Osmanlı’da harem*. İstanbul, 1995², 105–192. For the importance of customary law in Ottoman slavery, see Marie-Mathilde Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, “Coutumes appliquées aux esclaves dans l’Empire ottoman (XIV^e–XVII^e siècles),” in Eadem, *Seldjoudides, Ottomans et l’espace roumain*. Pub-

slaves;¹⁴ the employment of slaves in industry, commerce and agriculture;¹⁵ galley slaves and slaves of the Istanbul dockyards (*forsa*);¹⁶ the illegal enslavement of Ottoman (Muslim and *zimmi*) subjects and their chances of liberation;¹⁷ the ownership of slaves by non-Muslims and the attempts by the state to restrict this;¹⁸ the changes in slave identity and, within a gender studies perspective, the special problems of female slaves;¹⁹ Mediterranean piracy;²⁰ people crossing the border (sometimes more than once) between the Muslim and the Christian worlds and their perceptions of slavery; and so on.²¹

The new investigations have shown that various groups in society benefited from slave labour in different ways. The main slave-holder and distributor was the Ottoman state; and slaves were employed en masse only in the army. Military slaves included the well-known Janissaries and the salaried troops employed by the sultan's court, and also the private

liés par les soins du Dr. Cristina Feneşan. Istanbul, 2006, 109–121 (originally published in 1993).

¹⁴Seng, *op. cit.*, 136–169.

¹⁵İnalcık, *op. cit.*, 27–35; Halil Sahillioğlu, “On beşinci yüzyıl sonunda Bursa’da iş ve sanayi hayatı. Kölelikten patronluğa,” in *Mémorial Ömer Lâtîfi Barkan*. Paris, 1980, 179–188. Fisher, “Chattel Slavery,” 36–39. Haim Gerber, *Economy and Society in an Ottoman City: Bursa, 1600–1700*. Jerusalem, 1988, 10–11. Erdem, *op. cit.*, 11–17.

¹⁶Michel Fontenay, “Chiourmes turques au XVII^e siècle,” in *Le genti del mare Mediterraneo (XVII^e Colloque international d’histoire maritime. Napoli, 1980)*. Napoli, 1981, 877–903. İdris Bostan, *Osmanlı bahriye teşkilâtı: XVII. yüzyılda Tersâne-i Âmire*. (Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, VII/101.) Ankara, 1992, 209–220. Bono, *op. cit.*

¹⁷Nicolas Vatin, “Une affaire interne. Le sort et la libération des personnes de condition libre illégalement retenues en esclavage sur le territoire ottoman (XVI^e siècle),” *Turcica* 33 (2001) 149–190.

¹⁸Robert Mantran, *Istanbul dans la second moitié du XVII^e siècle. Essai d’histoire institutionnelle, économique et sociale*. Paris, 1962, 508. Sahillioğlu, “Slaves,” 83–86. Sak, *op. cit.*, 182. Erdem, *op. cit.*, 27–29. Faroqhi, “Quis Custodiet Custodes,” 127–129.

¹⁹Suraiya Faroqhi, “From the Slave Market to Ararat: Biographies of Bursa Women in the Late Fifteenth Century,” in Eadem, *Stories of Ottoman Men and Women. Establishing Status, Establishing Control*. Istanbul, 2002, 133–149. Eadem, “A Builder as Slave Owner and Rural Moneylender: Hacı Abdullah of Bursa, Campaign *mimar*,” in *op. cit.*, 95–112, esp. 101–102. Eadem, “Quis Custodiet Custodes,” 121–136.

²⁰Cf. the relevant literature quoted in Pál Fodor’s contribution in the present volume.

²¹Bartolomé Bennassar – Lucile Bennassar, *Les Chrétiens d’Allah. L’histoire extraordinaire des renégats, XVI^e et XVII^e siècles*. Paris, 1989. Cf. Suraiya Faroqhi, *Kultur und Alltag im osmanischen Reich. Vom Mittelalter bis zum Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts*. München, 1995, 95–117.

armies or retinues of military commanders (*beys*, *beylerbeyis*, viziers); even modest *timar*-holding *sipahis* might possess soldier-slaves and lead them into war.²² From the end of the fourteenth century onwards, increasing demand for manpower in the army induced the Ottoman state to draft the children of its own Christian subjects as long-term soldiers. It was at this time that the *devşirme* was introduced, a regular levy of boys that became a very important source of recruitment, not only of the Janisseries but also of the central administration and imperial household, both of which increasingly relied on slaves.²³ The Ottoman Mediterranean and Black Sea fleets were still bigger consumers. The need for galley slaves grew in step with the growth in Ottoman naval power and in the number of galleys. Although a considerable percentage of the Christian slaves obtained by the state were sent to row the galleys, the fleets could have swallowed up a multiple of those made available to them. For this reason the administration devised special arrangements by which certain groups of ordinary Ottoman subjects were pressed into service as rowers.²⁴

There is broad consensus among historians that most slaves not in the service of the sultan could be found in the households of the well-to-do. In other words domestic slavery was the other most typical form of slave-holding in the Ottoman Empire. In some places and on occasion – for example in fifteenth century in Bursa – slaves played a non-negligible role in certain industrial and commercial sectors, and some scholars think that their use in agriculture was more significant than was earlier believed.²⁵ Yet apparently these cases must be regarded as exceptional as far as the Empire in its entirety is concerned. The probate inventories unequivocally testify that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries only a minority could afford the luxury of holding slaves.²⁶

²²The timariot army in the sub-province of Bosnia was full of “renegades” in about 1520, see Ahmed S. Aličić, “Popis Bosanske vojske pred bitku na Mohaču 1526 godine,” *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju* 25 (1975) 171–202. From the *timar defteris* concerning Hungary it emerges that a high percentage of all *timar*-holders were former Christians.

²³Cf. supra note 8.

²⁴Bostan, *op. cit.*, 187–208, 220–224.

²⁵See, for instance, Seng, *op. cit.*, esp. 141–142, 150–151. Her evidence, however, does not seem convincing, and besides, the Istanbul region on which she has worked was hardly typical of the whole empire.

²⁶Ömer Barkan, Edirne askerî kassamı'na âit tereke defterleri (1545–1656). *Belgeler* 3:5–6 (1966) 85–472. Hüseyin Özdeğer, *1463–1640 yılları Bursa şehri tereke defterleri*. İstanbul, 1988, 126–133. Cf. Gerber, *op. cit.*, 10–11. Said Öztürk, *Askeri kassama ait on-*

This spectacular upswing notwithstanding, there are areas of Ottoman slavery that have still not received the attention they deserve. These include the issues of prisoners of war and more particularly of ransom slavery.²⁷ The available evidence seems to indicate that most captives were acquired either in wartime or in kidnapping operations conducted during periods of truce. Moreover for long periods, especially in regions close to the border, the most significant and flourishing trade was ransom slavery. Yet historians of the Ottoman Empire have paid very little attention to these topics. Regrettably, a large part of those studies that do exist has gone largely unnoticed by international scholarship, mainly on account of language barriers.²⁸ While slave-trading along the coasts of the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, chiefly the North African littoral, is relatively well known,²⁹ the hunt for, the trade in and the treatment of captives in the Balkans and Central Europe are still to be researched and presented in more detail.³⁰

In this volume we hope to make a modest contribution to this important subject. The twelve studies it contains are organised around closely

yedinci asır İstanbul tereke defterleri (sosyo-ekonomik tahlil). İstanbul, 1995, 201–209. Erdem, *op. cit.*, 16–17.

²⁷In this I agree with Suraiya Faroqhi who wrote (*The Ottoman Empire and the World Around It*. London, New York, 2004, 135): “...research concerning prisoners of war on Ottoman territory, and on Ottoman captives abroad is still in its beginning stages”.

²⁸Cf. the vast literature quoted in Géza Pálffy’s article in the present volume.

²⁹In addition to the works cited in Mária Ivanics’s and Pál Fodor’s studies, see Halil Sahillioğlu, “Akdeniz’de korsanlara esir düşen Abdi Çelebin’nin mektubu,” *Tarih Dergisi* 18–19 (1963) 241–256.

³⁰Karl Jahn, *Türkische Freilassungserklärungen des 18. Jahrhunderts (1702–1776)*. Napoli, 1963. Marie-Mathilde Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, “Sur le régime des captifs dans l’Empire ottoman au XV^e–XVII^e siècles,” in Eadem, *Seldjoukides*, 87–107 (originally published in 1983). Eadem, “La rôle des esclaves en Roumanie turque au XV^e siècle,” *Byzantinische Forschungen* 11 (1987) 15–28. Nicolas Vatin, “Note sur l’attitude des sultans ottomans et de leurs sujets face à la captivité des leurs en terre chrétienne (fin XV^e–XVI^e siècle),” *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* (in memoriam Anton C. Schaendlinger) 82 (1992) 375–395. Idem, “Deux documents sur la libération de musulmans captifs chez les Francs (1573),” *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 83 (1993) 223–230. Géza Dávid, “Manumitted Female Slaves at Galata and Istanbul Around 1700,” in *Frauen, Bilder und Gelehrte. Studien zu Gesellschaft und Künsten im Osmanischen Reich. Arts, Women and Scholars. Studies in Ottoman Society and Culture. Festschrift Hans Georg Majer*. Hrsg. von / Ed. by Sabine Präter and Christoph K. Neumann. İstanbul, 2002, 229–236.

connected themes: the acquisition of (war) prisoners, kidnapping and ransom slavery. The area under scrutiny extends from the Crimea to Malta, but the focus is on Hungary. That the authors are Hungarians explains this choice only in part; for over three centuries, this region was a major focus of slave hunters and slave traders, apart from and in addition to the South Russian steppes, the Caucasus, and the seas. We know from a document dated 1403 that even at this time the warriors of ‘half the Balkans’ used to raid Hungary to kidnap human beings.³¹ Other evidence attests that along with Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbs, Bosnians, Albanians and Rumanians, Hungarians were the most popular quarry for Ottoman raiders (*akıncı*).³² Apparently, for the Ottomans the fifteenth century was the heyday of the acquisition of captives in Hungary. Given this situation, the sources used by the authors of the first three articles to cast light on this “dark age” seem to be particularly valuable.

By contrast, information about the techniques of acquiring, holding and exchanging captives that were current in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are extremely rich; and therefore most of the studies in the present volume deal with this later age. Each telling a particular story, the case studies all indicate that the main purpose of the acquisition of captives was ransom, because – as mentioned above – this procedure yielded the largest profit. This explains why on many occasions the Ottomans seized even their own subjects (cf. the study by István György Tóth) and that – in violation of official peace treaties and religious law – soldiers of the Kingdom of Hungary and of the Ottoman Empire continually kidnapped persons from each other’s territory, stubbornly endeavouring – for years in some cases – to secure the gain that was hoped for.

The contribution of Géza Pálffy describes, more thoroughly than any hitherto, the daily pattern of ransom slavery as it flourished in the Habsburg–Ottoman borderlands during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. When we compare his findings with those concerned with other border areas, we find that customary law played a tremendously important role, and that is why there are so many similarities between the practices of different periods and regions.³³ We have good reason to suppose that

³¹George T. Dennis, “Three Reports from Crete on the Situation in Romania, 1401–1402,” *Studi Veneziani* 12 (1970) 246–247.

³²Cf. the observation made by Felix Faber in 1483, quoted in the present volume (p. 18).

³³Customary law also affected considerably the behaviour of the Ottoman administration (cf. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, “Coutumes appliquées”), which on occasion

by the fifteenth century the system of ransom slavery as reconstructed by this author may have already evolved in outline along the entire Ottoman– Christian borderline.³⁴

Throughout, the contributors to this volume have adopted a broad perspective. Not only do they examine Christian slavery in the Ottoman Empire, but, using western sources, they also provide greater insight into the tribulations of Ottoman slaves on Habsburg territory.³⁵ In addition, our work attempts to shed light on the devastating effects of captive-related transactions, especially those to do with guarantees, on trade; occasionally the financial position of whole communities, or in the case of Transylvania, even an entire country was jeopardised. Furthermore some of our contributors dwell on the mental shock that enslaved people had to endure, due to the enforced change of religion, or more broadly speaking, of their entire identities.

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not only neglected restrictions imposed by religious law and by pacts among sovereigns, but also, sometimes at the demand of the soldiers, tried to regulate disputed issues. One such was whether the foot soldiers should, like mounted warriors, pay the “one-fifth tax” (*pencik*) after the prisoners taken on enemy territory. In February 1552, the Imperial Council accepted that they should be exempt from this obligation and thus tacitly gave kidnapping in peacetime its blessing; on this, see Pál Fodor, “Adatok a magyarországi török rabszedésről [Data on the Acquisition of Captives by the Ottomans in Hungary],” *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 109:4 (1996) 140.

³⁴It offers, therefore, a useful model that we can use to elucidate for instance a ransom negotiation between Latins and Turks in the early Ottoman period; as Kate Fleet has observed, “the mechanism by which it was organised is very obscure” (Fleet, *op. cit.*, 53). (Fleet, *op. cit.*, 53).

³⁵This is usually discussed on the basis of the memoirs of Osman Ağa; see most recently Frédéric Hitzel, “Osmân Ağa, captif ottoman dans l’Empire des Habsbourg à la fin du XVII^e siècle,” *Turcica* 33 (2001) 191–212.

MIRACULOUS ESCAPES FROM OTTOMAN CAPTIVITY

ENIKŐ CSUKOVITS

The September 25, 1396 was a sombre day for Christian Europe: Sultan Bayezid I (1389–1402) annihilated the crusader troops at Nicopolis in the Lower Danube Region. The defeat was unexpected and shocking: the Ottomans were considered a new enemy on the European battlefields; peoples living along the routes of the Ottoman expansion were in the initial phase of getting acquainted with the Empire's might and fighting methods. The army led by the Hungarian king and assisted by French, Burgundian, German, and Polish knights crossed the Danube in August with the aim of expelling the Ottomans from European soil. "Were the skies to fall upon them, the tips of their spears would have upheld it", boasted the French knights. Their boundless self-confidence, however, proved to be somewhat impetuous. The Christians reached the castle on the rock at Nicopolis, that was considered one of the key strategic points on the Lower Danube, on September 12. Two weeks later the main body of the Ottoman army arrived to relieve the castle and the following day defeated the crusaders. King Sigismund of Hungary (1387–1437) could barely escape from the battlefield; the majority of the soldiers were either killed or taken captive. Following a bloody hand-to-hand combat, Count John of Nevers, the heir to the throne of Burgundy, Enguerrand, the landlord of Couchy, Guillaume de Trémoille, the Marshal of Burgundy, and the famous Marshal Boucicaut, the archetype of chivalry, were captured. It was a total disaster; the ire of the sultan was particularly vicious since he was very much aggrieved by the losses inflicted on his troops. The prisoners of war, who were stripped of all their clothes, were driven in front of him in groups of three and four, where most of them were beheaded. The most distinguished captives, also naked, stood next to the sultan and had to watch the brutal execution of their fellow soldiers. The

bloody scene was just the first act in the course of ordeals that they were to suffer in the future.¹

Those crusaders, whose lives were spared were driven to Gallipoli, several hundreds of kilometres from Nicopolis on foot, wearing a last piece of clothing. They were then shipped to Asia Minor. Commoners and the lesser nobles, such as the Bavarian Hans Schiltberger who wrote a book about his sufferings after his escape, became the sultan's slaves.² The most illustrious captives were guarded in Bursa far from the sea. Sultan Bayezid asked for 200 thousand golden florins in return for the release of the Burgundian heir and his fellow soldiers. It was such a vast amount that would have been impossible to gather without the joint effort of the European leaders. However, even this was not the total ransom: for the release of Leusták Jolsvai, the Hungarian Palatine (i.e. viceroy), who fought together with the French, the Ottoman ruler demanded an extra 50 thousand golden florins.³

The unbelievable news of the defeat reached Paris by December, where they had to wait more than a year for the return of the crusade's leaders. The Count of Nevers and some of his surviving fellow soldiers reached their respective homes as late as February 1398. By then the self-deceiving re-assessment of the events had started: the heir to the Burgundian throne marched into Dijon and Paris as a victor; his heroism demonstrated in the Battle of Nicopolis earned him the adjective "fearless".

"There was no family in the kingdom that did not have to mourn at least one member who died in the battle", noted the chronicler of Saint-

¹Joseph Delaville le Roulx, *La France en Orient au XIV^e siècle: expéditions du maréchal Boucicaut*. Paris, 1886. Aziz Suryal Atiya, *The Crusade of Nicopolis*, London, 1934 (reprinted 1978). Regarding the accounts of the battle, see primarily *Le Livre des faits du bon Messire Jean Le Maingre, dit mareschal Boucicaut*. Ed. by Denis Lalande. Genève, 1985 and *Chronique du Religieux de Saint-Denys contenant le règne de Charles VI de 1380 à 1422*. I–II. Publiée en latin et traduit par M. L. Bellaguet, introduction de B. Guinée. Paris, 1994.

²*Hans Schiltbergers Reisebuch*. Nach der Nürnberger Handschrift herausgegeben von F. Langmantel. Tübingen, 1885.

³Boucicaut's chronicler also gave an account of the circumstances in which Jolsvai was taken captive; cf. *Le Livre des faits*, 110–111. The Palatine's family was unable to collect the ransom for his release, thus he subsequently died in Ottoman captivity. Elemér Mályusz, *Kaiser Sigismund in Ungarn 1387–1437*. Budapest, 1990, 134.

Denis.⁴ Indeed, the west European and specifically the French–Burgundian military contingent had to pay a high price for their self-confidence at Nicopolis; these losses, however, were temporary – no doubt bloody and costly – and negligible compared to those suffered by the Hungarians. The tribulations became part of their every-day life for centuries to come. For the Hungarian Kingdom, whose army faced the Ottoman forces in a pitched battle for the first time, not only suffered heavy losses at Nicopolis, but its people – be it military or civilian – had a first-hand experience what it meant to be living next door to the new conquerors.

The first incursions occurred in 1390 after the Ottomans gained the upper hand over Serbia following the battle of Nicopolis and thus reached the Hungarian frontier. Those who suffered most as a result of the attacks were the southernmost regions of the country: the Szerémség (Syrmiun, an area between the Danube and the Sava) and the so-called Temesköz, between the rivers Temes and the Lower Danube. The following year Ottoman troops advanced into the Szerémség again eradicating some towns. In 1392 the attacks centred on the Temesköz. On hearing the news, Hungarian troops hurried there but they could only find the traces of devastation: the Ottomans left the country with their captives and booty as quickly as they could. Had the Hungarians arrived in time and defeated the pillaging bands, even that would have been insufficient to stem the deterioration of the southern parts, because the majority of subsequent attacks also afflicted this region. During the following decades, Ottoman troops reached other new regions as well, and thus the frontline became wider and wider.⁵

⁴*Chronique de Religieux*, 522–523.

⁵Regarding the struggle between Ottomans and Hungarians, see primarily Ferenc Szakály, “Phases of Turco–Hungarian Warfare before the Battle of Mohács (1365–1526),” *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 33 (1979) 65–111. Pál Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen. A History of Medieval Hungary, 895–1526*. London, New York, 2001 (relating chapters). Further important studies on the subject: Gyula Rázsó, “A Zsigmond-kori Magyarország és a török veszély (1393–1437) [Hungary during the Reign of King Sigismund and the Ottoman Peril],” *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 20:3 (1973) 403–441. Pál Engel, “A török–magyar háborúk első évei 1389–1392 [The First Years of the Ottoman–Hungarian Wars, 1389–1392],” *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 111:3 (1998) 561–577. Idem, “Ungarn und die Türkengefahr zur Zeit Sigismunds (1387–1437),” in *Das Zeitalter König Sigismunds in Ungarn und im Deutschen Reich*. Hrsg. von Tilmann Schmidt – Péter Gunst. Debrecen, 2000, 55–71.

At the beginning of the fifteenth century Bosnia was submerged in internal struggle so the Ottomans easily gained influence there. As a result of this, the raiders appeared in Croatia and Slavonia, both of which had been considered relatively safe regions up until then. In 1408, a Turkish troop entered into Carniola via Slavonia. In 1415, they appeared along the remote Styrian frontier. In the 1420s Ottoman armies found a new target: Transylvania which until then was believed to be a protected region. They reached the province via Wallachia and ransacked one of its most significant towns, Brassó. The Hungarian Kingdom was now forced to defend its 800 km long southern frontier between the Adriatic coast and the southeast corner of Transylvania. In the 1420s King Sigismund began some significant fortification works on the Lower Danube region which was the most endangered section of frontier. The building of chains of fortresses could reduce the danger but it could not halt it. The Ottoman raiders reappeared on Hungarian territory time and again. The only change was the frequency of these attacks which depended on Hungarian and Ottoman internal affairs respectively, and the size of the area to be attacked. Even in the safest period from the Hungarian point of view, i.e. during the reign of king Matthias Hunyadi, the Ottomans continued with their incursions: they reached the Austrian provinces, Nagyvárad in the heart of the country and Transylvania. The largest army to invade Transylvania was defeated by Pál Kinizsi, the count (*comes*) of Temes county, and István Báthori, the Voivode of Transylvania at Kenyérmező (1479). Despite their decisive victory, however, the fact remained that the Ottomans yet again penetrated into the central part of the country. Kenyérmező was about 150 and Nagyvárad 300 km from the southern frontiers.⁶

The Ottomans began their territorial conquests in Hungary in the 1520s. By then they had inflicted heavy losses both in terms of human lives and materials in the previous 130 years, that is five–six generations. There were areas in the south where 90 per cent of the localities were destroyed.⁷ On the whole, the entire population felt the effects of the Ottoman attacks both directly and indirectly. By the end of the fifteenth

⁶Ferenc Szakály – Pál Fodor, A kenyérmezei csata (1479. október 13.) [The Battle of Kenyérmező (October 13, 1479)],” *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 111:2 (1998) 309–350.

⁷Pál Engel, “A török dúlások hatása a népességre: Valkó vármegye példája [The Effects of Ottoman Raids on the Population: The Example of Valkó County],” *Századok* 134:2 (2000) 267–321.

century there was hardly any noble family in Hungary that did not have a male member fighting the Ottomans while the tax-payers contributed with their ever increasing taxes towards the defence of the southern frontiers. The primary aim of the raiders was the acquisition of booty. The most important booty was humans who could be sold at the slaves market at a high price. After a successful attack thousands of prisoners of war were driven to the Ottoman markets but – as the Nicopolis example shows – the value of the soldiers captured in the battlefields was not underestimated either.

No one was safe in the endangered areas – nobles and serfs could equally become slaves. Benedek Himfi was one of the most famous Hungarian barons in the fourteenth century. He started his career as a courtier in the 1340s, from the 1350s he acquired the count's office of several counties. Between 1366 and 1369 he acted as the governor (*banus*) of the newly conquered Bulgaria, and from then on he was regarded as one of the barons.⁸ His estates lay partly in the heart of the country, partly in Temes county, whose count he acted in the 1370s. His daughter Margit was carried off from the village of Egerszeg in Temes county during one of the first incursions presumably in 1391 or 1392. (Himfi was dead by then.) The family had been looking for her for years in vain. Finally, in 1405 a relation called Miklós Marcali found her in Crete. Margit Himfi became the slave mistress of a Venetian dignitary, with whom she had two daughters. Her master agreed to release her without any ransom, moreover, he covered her travel expenses. He was presumably attached to her emotionally. We know her subsequent fate from a letter written many years later in which he enquired about her. As it transpires from the reply, the captivity destroyed Margit Himfi's life for good. Women carried off in such circumstances and who became concubines were considered as an embarrassment in Hungary. If they could return to Hungary in one way or another, they could not escape ostracism by the public. Only the author of the letter, the mentioned Italian tradesman, and his relatives kept contact with Margit Himfi and

⁸Pál Engel, "Himfi Benedek," in *Korai magyar történelmi lexikon (9–14. század)* [Historical Lexicon of the Early Hungarian Period, 9th–14th centuries], Editor-in-chief Gyula Kristó. Ed. by Pál Engel – Ferenc Makk. Budapest, 1994, 263. Pál Engel, "Honor, vár, ispánság. Tanulmányok az Anjou-királyság kormányzati rendszeréről [Honor, Castle, and *Ispanate*. Studies on the System of Government of the Angevin Kings]," *Századok* 116:5 (1982) 890–893.

her daughters, who had been searched for so long and finally brought home.⁹

Another Hungarian prisoner of war called Georgius de Hungaria was captured by the Ottomans during one of their biggest raids in 1438. The troops carried on ransacking and devastating Transylvania for one and a half months without encountering any serious opposition. Georgius was 15–16 years old at that time and was at school in Szászsebes, a town in south Transylvania. We learn of the circumstances of his capture and subsequent escape from his own account. Georgius wrote a treatise (*Tractatus*) about Ottoman customs many years after his return. According to his reminiscences, the Voivode of Wallachia, who accompanied the beleaguering Ottomans, promised free withdrawal for the more affluent citizens; the others were told that they would be resettled in Turkey as one group. There were some who did not want to fall captives and therefore locked themselves up in a tower; one of them was Georgius. The Ottomans lit a fire at the bottom of the tower and, more or less, roasted the defenders. Then they dragged the half-dead survivors out of the tower and drove them to the slave market in Edirne. Georgius spent twenty years in captivity until he was liberated by his master.¹⁰

The protagonists of the third case, which is also known from János Thuróczy's chronicle, were captured during a skirmish in Bosnia. In 1415, the voivode Hervoja, a Bosnian grandee who rebelled against the Hungarians and his Ottoman allies, defeated the Hungarian army sent to check them. They cruelly executed the commander of the Hungarian army, Pál Csupor, the governor of Slavonia, and the prisoners of war were handed over to the Ottomans. The other Hungarian commander, János Garai, was released from captivity the following year. The liberation of his companions, however, took several years; the sultan's representatives asked for 65 thousand golden florins for the release of János Maróti, the governor of Macsó, Márton Szerdahelyi Ders, and other

⁹Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Dispacci Ungheria, fol. 256; cf. *Zsigmondkori oklevéltár (1400–1410)* [Documents from the Time of Sigismund of Luxemburg]. II. Compiled by Elemér Mályusz. Budapest, 1953, Nos. 4024, 6189, 6407.

¹⁰Georgius de Hungaria, *Incipit prohemium in tractatum de moribus, conditionibus et nequicia Turcorum*, Urach, 1481. I used its Hungarian translation: *Értekezés a törökök szokásairól, viszonyairól és gonoszságáról 1438–1458*, in *Rabok, követek, kalmárok az oszmán birodalomról* [Captives, Envoys, and Merchants on the Ottoman Empire]. Translated by Győző Kenéz. Published by Lajos Tardy. Budapest, 1977, 49–153.

important captives. It was such a vast amount that the king had to levy extra taxes in order to collect it.¹¹

The protagonists of the above three cases were eventually released from captivity; their lives, however, had been changed temporarily or permanently by it. We know nothing of the fate of the majority of Hungarians who, like these people, were taken captives by the Ottomans. We cannot even estimate their number. The Ottomans may have taken several thousand captives at each time they launched a major attack. “As I myself have heard it from them, they have kidnapped so many people at one time that a captive was sold for as little as a fur cap”, wrote Georgius de Hungaria in his book.¹² It would be even riskier to estimate how many of these captives returned to their home after decades of captivity. There was a slim chance for those kidnapped ever to be released. Grandees, rich nobles, and their family members, who were captured in battle or their homes could be bought back at a high price – if ever found.¹³ The vast majority of the male and female captives were serfs whose redeeming was next to impossible. For the latter there was no way out but to run away, with all the risks entailed. On the basis of his own experiences, however, Georgius de Hungaria regarded such attempts as entirely impossible: “They used to escape in many different ways but they could not achieve anything by it, because there is hardly one of them who can actually get away, especially those who were taken across the sea. Also, the Ottomans find many and various methods to prevent them from escaping, or following and finding them. If they are found and brought back after their flight, their lives are made even more miserable.”¹⁴

Prisoners of war in Ottoman captivity faced the greatest ordeals of their lives. In their grave situation, they could primarily rely on their own

¹¹At the meeting of the state dignitaries in September 1416, a charter created in order to support the release of the captives survived in two copies in MOL DL 43338; the other copy: *ibid.*, DL 71377; an abstract thereof can be found in *Zsigmondkori oklevéltár*. V. Compiled by Elemér Mályusz – Iván Borsa. Budapest, 1997, No. 2255.

¹²Georgius de Hungaria, *op. cit.*, 67.

¹³In 1465, a nobleman from the Temesköz, Balázs Necpali mortgaged some of his estates worth of 200 golden florins in order to redeem his wife and three children seized by the Ottomans. A year later he still hoped for the return of his wife from Turkey, but after some more years passed, he gave up the search for her, moved to his estates in North Hungary and got married again. DL 63215, 63217, 63259.

¹⁴Georgius de Hungaria, *op. cit.*, 70–71.

skills or some spiritual help. The latter was probably useful to reinforce individual courage to carry out the action. Therefore, it is not accidental that we find the largest number of and most detailed accounts of their escapes among the entries in the so-called register of miracles put down at the shrines in medieval Hungary. In 1415 baron János Garai prayed for escape to the Holy Blood that belonged to one of the most famous relics of the country and was preserved at the monastery of Bába. A chronicle and even a historical epic song gave an account of his vow: “After having spent a long time in captivity, when he could finally escape, he bequeathed his weighty shackles to the monastery in Bába as the fulfilment of his vow, where they were dedicated to the memory of the posterity, and to the glory of the sacred blood of Our Lord the Redeemer.”¹⁵

The lists of the most significant shrines in late medieval Hungary are contained in the works of Petrus Ransanus, Antonio Bonfini, and Miklós Oláh.¹⁶ All mention the Holy Blood relic of the monastery in Bába, and the tombs of St Stephen, the founder of the Hungarian state, and his son St Emeric at Székesfehérvár; the grave of St Ladislaus, the Hungarian saint knight, at Nagyvárad, and the grave of John Capistran, the Franciscan friar who came from Italy, at Újlak.¹⁷ In addition to these shrines

¹⁵Johannes de Thurocz, *Chronica Hungarorum*. I. Ed. by Elisabeth Galántai – Julius Kristó. Budapest, 1985, 223–224. The story of János Garai was written and sung by Sebestyén Tinódi Lantos, the most famous singer of the following century: “The Banus good János Garai was taken captive / And was kept in cruel captivity / And finally escaping from the dungeon / and his freedom was granted onto him by God. / In haste he would have gone to Bátha / and with the irons with which he had been shackled / he abandoned them by the shrine of the Holy Blood / Because he escaped due to him – so saith he.” *Régi magyar költők tára*. II. Tinódi Sebestyén összes művei 1540–1555 [Collection of Works by Ancient Hungarian Poets. Collected Works by Sebestyén Tinódi, 1540–1555]. Budapest, 1881, 344.

¹⁶Petrus Ransanus, *Epithoma rerum Hungararum*. Curam gerebat Petrus Kulcsár. Budapest, 1977. Antonius Bonfini, *Rerum Hungaricarum decades...* (Bibliotheca scriptorum... Saeculum XV. Nova series, I.) I–IV. Ed. by József Fögel – Béla Iványi – László Juhász. Lipsiae, Budapest, 1936–1941. Nicolaus Olahus, *Hungaria – Athila*. Ediderunt Colomannus Eperjessy – Ladislaus Juhász. Budapest, 1938.

¹⁷The passage referring to the four shrines is quoted from Ransanus’s work being the oldest one; there is basically no difference between the various texts. Bába: *Batensis a Bata nominatus, qui vicus quidem est sed nobilis ob situm in eo monachorum ordinis sancti Benedicti monasterium, quod fama illustrissimum est propter evidens illud miraculum, quo in sacra hostia sanguis cum portiuncula quadam Christi carnis videtur, ut affirmant innumeri, qui viderunt* (61.50.); Fehérvár: *Est illic basilica olim a beato*

popular with the entire nation, Miklós Oláh considered the respective relics of St John the Alms-giver at Buda and St Paul the Hermit at Budaszentlőrinc significant.¹⁸ We know of extant registers of miracles in two places, at Újlak and Budaszentlőrinc. The one at Újlak contains miracles that occurred between 1458 and 1461, the other – compiled by Bálint Hadnagy – listed cases from between 1422 and 1505. A couple of months after the victory at Nándorfehérvár (Belgrade), John Capistran died in the Franciscan monastery at Újlak by the Danube in October 1456. Miracles started by his grave on the day of his death. His canonisation was initiated in 1460, the register of miracles compiled for the purposes of the canonisation contained altogether more than 500 cases, some of which overlapped.¹⁹ The guardians of the relics of St Paul the Hermit continuously kept a register of the miracles performed by him. Bálint Hadnagy, the Pauline monk, presumably selected those miracles that he published in his printed book entitled *Vita divi Pauli...* in 1511 from this register.²⁰

In both miracle series we can primarily read about miraculous recoveries; other cases are relatively far and few between. The latter –

Stephano condita, ... eo nobilissima, quod in ea conditur eiusdem regis ac beati Emerici filii eius venerabile corpus (62.54); Várad: *Ubi est Varadinum oppidum illustre basilica, in qua beati Ladislai sacrum corpus sepultum est*" (68.97); Újlak: *Occurrit deinde Huliatic, in quo oppido Ioannis Capistrani viri dei corpus conditur, quod divina virtute multis fertur clarere miraculis* (83.95).

¹⁸Olahus, Hungaria, 8.5: *Haec praeter situm atque architecturam tum regiam, tum corpore divi Ioannis Eleemosynarii insignis fuit*; 9.12: *Supra mons divi Pauli cernitur sylvosus monasterio fratrum Eremitarum et corpore Pauli primi eremitaie olim clarus.*

¹⁹It was Erik Fügedi who started working on the registers of miracles; see his "Kapisztránói János csodái. A jegyzőkönyvek társadalomtörténeti tanulsága [The Miracles of John Capistran. Socio-historical Lessons Learnt from the Registers]," in Idem, *Kolduló barátok, polgárok, nemesek. Tanulmányok a magyar középkorról* [Friars, City Dwellers, and Nobles. Studies on Medieval Hungary]. Budapest, 1981, 7–56. For a recent, comprehensive study of the subject, see Stanko Andrić, *The Miracles of St John Capistran*. Budapest, 2000.

²⁰Valentinus Hadnagy, *Vita divi Pauli...* Venice, 1511. Its recent, bilingual publication (in Latin and Hungarian): Gábor Sarbak, *Miracula sancti Pauli primi heremite. Hadnagy Bálint pálos rendi kézikönyve, 1511.* (ΑΓΑΘΑ, XIII.) Debrecen, 2003. For the analysis of the source and the account of other miracles, see Éva Knapp, "Remete Szent Pál csodái. A budaszentlőrinci ereklyékhez kapcsolódó mirákulumfőjegyzések elemzése [The Miracles of St Paul the Hermit. An Analysis of the Register of Miracles Regarding the Relics at Budaszentlőrinc]," *Századok* 117:3 (1983) 511–557.

discounting cases in which the saint personally intervened – are rather homogenous: they contain individual escapes from captivity. In 23 cases, which accounts to 4.6 per cent of the recorded miracles, John Capistran helped the person asking for his intervention escape from captivity.²¹ St Paul the Hermit assisted in fewer (18), but proportionately in more cases (20 per cent of his miracles) those supplicating for his intercession regain their liberty. Among them there were people who had been captured by Czechs pillaging the northern parts of the country, or those who had been kidnapped by their enemies or highwaymen; in addition, some people were put in prison on real or false charges. Almost half of the captives, however, were taken by the Ottomans – the number one enemy in those days.

The majority of the descriptions give a detailed account of the circumstances in which the people were taken captive, the hardships endured during their captivity, and the way they escaped. In these texts – although they were written in Latin – the vitality of the Hungarian language shines through, the latter being the mother tongue they spoke and thought in. The persons giving the account were obviously re-living the dangers she/he had been through. There is only one prisoner of war who was a soldier carrying a weapon in his hand when he fell into captivity. Mihály Szilágyi – the maternal uncle of King Matthias – who was both the governor of Transylvania and the captain-general of southern Hungary – was taken captive together with his retinue in a smaller clash in enemy territory in 1460. It was then that a nobleman called Dömötör Kónya, living in Szaján – a village in the Temesköz – was also caught by the Ottomans. According to his account, “heavy shackles were put on him” and he was subsequently sold for 6 golden florins to a Ragusan man. Initially they agreed that his master would release him for 40 ducats. Later, however, when he saw that the captive was a high-ranking and well-dressed person, he raised the amount of the ransom to 110 ducats. In despair, Kónya made a vow to visit John Capistran’s grave. Indeed, help came soon: a Hungarian man took pity on his old age and gave him the key to the shackles. Once no shackles prevented him from free movement, he ran from the castle of Szendrő away, where he was imprisoned, through the moat. After four miles of walking, he reached

²¹Andrić, *op. cit.*, 304.

Nándorfehérvár which was under Hungarian control.²² He made no mention of the other soldiers who were also captured in the battle. Undoubtedly, the turn of events was not so propitious for them. According to other sources, the commander of the army, Mihály Szilágyi was taken to Constantinople and later executed.²³

In places inhabited by the other captives who asked for St Paul's and John Capistran's help, the raiding hordes came unexpectedly. Gergely the tailor, for example, was kidnapped while he was hoeing in his vineyard in Felfalu in Baranya county. István from Temes county was working in the fields when he was surrounded by soldiers. István Horváth and his fellows from Karom (later Karlóca) in the Szerémség were carried off while harvesting.²⁴ It is also indicative that they were all caught or escaped captivity in the most endangered areas of the country: four people in the Temesköz, four in the area between the Drava and Sava rivers in Valkó county, three people each in the Szerémség and Csanád county by the Maros river, one person in Baranya and Somogy counties in Transdanubia and Bács county that is to the north of the Lower Danube, respectively. In general, the farther one was taken from his/her home, the more difficult it was for him/her to flee. The luckiest could escape as soon as their town or village was attacked. That is how in 1471 István could escape although surrounded by the marauders in the field or the noble woman living in the vicinity of Temesvár took shelter in the nearby forest with her children.²⁵ Those who could not find refuge during the attacks, were driven through the Sava or Danube rivers towards the southern borders tied, shackled, and under close guard. Almost all mentioned the ropes and shackles that made it more difficult for them to escape as they had to get rid of them first in order to run away. The hands of the wounded Gergely the tailor, for example, were bound around his neck with a rope. Luckily, he managed to remove his dagger from its sheath unnoticed and cut the rope. Then he ran away in the nearby forest

²²Andrić, *op. cit.*, 401: Appendix No. 8.

²³Bonfini, *op. cit.*, 4. 1. 140.

²⁴Andrić, *op. cit.*, 400: App. No. 7. ...*quidam Stephanus in campi medio per eosdem circumvallatus...* Sarbak, *op. cit.*, 94: No. 40. Andrić, *op. cit.*, 403: App. No. 11.

²⁵*Altera vero matrona cum circa festum Margarithe circa Temeswaar Turcis omnibus beluina crudelitate depopulantibus sola cum suis parvulis cuiusdam silve densitatem intrasset.* Sarbak, *op. cit.*, 92: No. 34, 94: No. 40.

where the Turks were unable to catch him.²⁶ Pál the carpenter and several of his fellow-men from Cseri in Temes county had been driven from their home for five-day's walk, all the way to the Danube. They were bound securely for the night; Pál, however, could somehow untie the rope around his wrists then around his ankles with his teeth and backed out from the ring of the guards.²⁷ After having prayed to St Paul, Benedek, who was captured at Makó next to the Maros river, could as easily cut the iron shackles around his neck as if they had been made of wax.²⁸

István Horváth, captured at Karom in the Szerémség, was tied in an especially cruel manner. He was already in enemy territory, beyond the Sava river. Because he killed a Turk while defending himself, his head, legs, and arms were tied together to a beam. He was to be executed the following day. Somehow he managed to untie the rope and thus escape by opening the gate. But his wife, taken captive together with him, remained in the hands of the Turks.²⁹ There is no knowing as to what happened to his wife afterwards. When he made his vow, he did not know anything about her either. We have detailed accounts of the ordeals of two other women, Ilona from Gara and Anna, the widow of Mátyás Nagy, from Szent Márton near Gara – the first prayed to Capistran whereas the other asked for St Paul's help. The two cases are strikingly

²⁶...*manibusque ligatis fune in colle misso captivus deducitur, ... ruptis manuum suarum colligacionibus cultellum de vagina eduxit, funem de collo suo precidit et de manibus eorum exiliens acupedio cursu vastam silvam peciit et Turcis eum acriter insequentibus per Dei propiciacionem ac meritorum beati patris suffragacionem rursus ab eis capi non potuit sed saluber evasit.* Andrić, *op. cit.*, 400: App. No. 7.

²⁷...*ipsium nephandissimi Treuci cum aliis multis captivum abduxissent venissentque secum iuxta flumen Danobii essetque in nocte fortiter legatus ... Cum igitur sic orasset rescipiens hinc inde cepit dentibus suis ligaturam manuum dissolvere, quam cum solvisset similiter et de suis pedibus dissolvit surgensque cum bona confidentia et paulatim exivit de medio eorum quasi vigilancium.* Andrić, *op. cit.*, 402: App. No. 10.

²⁸...*quendam Benedictum nomine cum aliis multis capiendis in captum cum omnibus suis aspectaverunt usque ad fluvium Mwrva dictum, duobus miliaribus ad Mako. Cumque nimium afflictus votum ad sanctum Paulum emisisset, in quandam silva Turcis ab eo elongatis catheram ferream collo circumligatam cum coltello quasi ceram liquidam scidit et simul cum sociis liber evasit...* Sarbak, *op. cit.*, 96: No. 47.

²⁹...*captivum et ligatum duxissent ultra flumen Zawe essetque fortiter astrictus diris vinculis et diversimode tormentatus ita ut caput suum infra ad pedes reflexissent manusque et pedes suos ad trabem sursum ligassent, ... ligaminibus tam manuum, quam etiam omnium aliorum membrorum apertisque paulatim ianuis exivit de medio eorum, remanente uxore sua in manibus ipsorum...* Andrić, *op. cit.*, 403: App. No. 11.

similar. Taken captive together with many other people, Ilona, the wife of Tamás Garai, attested to her exceptional bravery, skilfulness, and perseverance. They were already in Serbian territory when, after having pronounced a vow, the cock of her shackles opened. She was wise enough to wait until the appropriate moment and thus temporarily closed the shackles. She untied the rope around her wrists with the help of her teeth, then re-opened the shackles and off she ran. It took her four days and night without food and water to reach the Sava river where she was captured by the Serbs and re-sold. As she attested to it at Újlak later, she had been sold five times before she could make her final escape.³⁰ Ten years later in 1471, Anna, the wife of the late Mátyás Nagy, was also driven off beyond the Sava river. After the night she made her vow she managed to escape while the Turks were asleep. Reaching the Sava river, she was also caught by the Serbs. Her ordeals had luckily ended at that point in time: the Serbs “in a miraculous way listened to their inner voice of compassion” and not only let her go but also carried her over the river.³¹ It must be noted that Ilona from Gara was not the only person to have been sold several times. Bálint Erdődi from Valkó county, for example, had similarly been sold several times while in Ottoman captivity. Although he tried to escape many times, he was re-caught until he miraculously rescued himself.³²

³⁰...*quo facto lingua compedis de sera ita exilivit ac si dura malei percussione fuisset propulsata; verum cernens mulier propter Turcorum custodias ad fugiendum tempus non esset opportunum, ipsius sere linguam restituit in locum suum ... Apto itaque tempore ad fugiendum considerato cordas quibus manus sue erant ligate dentibus dissolvit et ... prosiluit ... et quatuor diebus et noctibus absque omni alimento sed gaudens per processum vie usque ad Zawe fluvium pervenit, sed eam iterum Rasciani captivarunt et rursum vendiderunt. Quinque itaque vicibus successim vendita dum fuisset...* Andrić, *op. cit.*, 399: App. No. 5.

³¹...*prima fuit relicta quondam Mathie Magni Anna dicta de Zenthmantnii prope Gara, cum per sevissimos Turcos circa festum beati Jacobi fuisset capta et deducta ad civitatem Parodiina, recordata meritorum beati Pauli votum vovit visitare reliquias eiusdem sequenti nocte Turcis dormientibus per omnia castra eorum libera evasit at cum per Rascianos (circa Zawam veniens) iterum detenta fuisset. Idem quod prius vovens modo mirabili per eosdem Rascianos intuitu misericordie dimissa et per aquam transvecta...* Sarbak, *op. cit.*, 92: No. 34.

³²...*ipse cum per Turcos in captivitate deductus et ibi pluribus vicibus venditus fuisset nonnullies per fuge presidium ab ipsis liberati attemptans semper recaptivatus exitit...* Andrić, *op. cit.*, 398: App. No. 3.

One of the morals of the cases contained in the register of miracles is that the captives could not really rely on outside help. There is only one case among them where a Hungarian sortie made the escape possible. Bertalan living in Erdővég in Valkó county was seized by the Turks on New Year's Day in 1461. When they reached a Serb town by the Sava river, they took a rest together with their captives. The same day, a Hungarian troop suddenly appeared from Nándorfehérvár, ransacked and scorched the town; slaughtered, caught or put the Ottomans to flight. Bertalan could make his flight from his captors who pursued him even in the turmoil and, via a detour, he was able to join the Hungarians.³³ In the case of the other miraculous escapes, the Hungarian troops of the count of Temes and the *banus* of Macsó, etc, which were to defend the endangered areas, not only did not play any role, but it appears that the captives themselves did not count on them either. Even in the most miserable condition, the captives only pleaded for freedom but never hoped for troops that would free them from captivity and consequently never prayed for that. Very few could hope for being redeemed because the Ottomans had other intentions in driving them off from their homes. They considered the money they received at the slave-markets a more secure income than the amount they could ask for a grandee. The troops specialising in marauding were seemingly busy leaving Hungarian territory with the slaves as soon as possible. The bargaining that accompanied the ransom took time thus it was considered risky because the time spent on Hungarian soil was dangerously lengthened. It was in their best interest not to risk the occasional Hungarian attacks. Of all the cases examined in this study, they (would have) asked for ransom in two: for Dömötör Kónya, Mihály Szilágyi's soldier captured in battle, who escaped from Szendrő castle, and for a certain Máté who lived in the town of Kő on the Danube. The Ottomans must have considered the latter a wealthy man as they demanded 200 golden florins for his release but in the end they were happy to receive 10. Moreover, for this amount, they took him to the

³³*Et ecce eodem die Ungari de castro Albanandor armatis manibus irruentes contra civitatem predictam spoliantes ac conburrentes eam funditus et quos potuerunt ex Treucis trucidarunt, quosdam autem captivos duxerunt, reliquos vero in fugam converterunt. Juvenis autem sepredictus fugam peciit ante Turcos ad silvam, qui eum prosequentes nec invenire valentes, ex alia parte circuiens iunxit se Ungaris liberatus de manibus pessimorum, cum quibus venit ad predictum castrum...* Andrić, *op. cit.*, 402: App. No. 9.

frontier.³⁴ That the latter procedure was far from being standard is corroborated by the fact that Máté deemed it important to make mention of it in his statement.³⁵

Captives taken over the Danube and Sava rivers arrived in enemy territory. Serbs living under Ottoman rule showed little sympathy towards the Hungarian captives and their attempts to escape. On the contrary, they tried to make the most of the slave trade. The psychological frontier may have been the castle of Szendrő, the former Serbian capital: one could escape from here as was shown by two cases. The chances of escape for those carried beyond Szendrő diminished by the mile. The chances of ever returning were slim for those who were driven off inside the Ottoman Empire. Balázs Sárkány and his wife from Csanád were seized simultaneously and spent ten years in captivity. They were lucky in so far as they were not separated, moreover, they had two daughters born in captivity. Eventually, they were sold to the Holy Land where they did not spend much time; the sultan had their master murdered and all of them were freed and allowed to return home.³⁶ Balázs Szentgyörgyi from Somogy county, on the other hand, spent a much longer period in the Ottoman Empire: he was released after 22 years of captivity.³⁷

The captives – regardless of their own role played in the escape – all attested to the holy intervention through which they managed to rescue themselves from slavery. After their return, as soon as opportunity arose, they fulfilled their vow taken in emergency. They went to St Paul’s or John Capistran’s tomb where gave thanks for the help. Dömötör Kónya became so exhausted as a result of the escape that he was unable to live up to his vow for some time. “As soon as his health was restored”, reads the register of miracles, “in accordance with his vow, he went to the

³⁴...*Turcus non eum libertati sue dare nisi ducentis florenis persolutis, verum omnipotens Deus per merita beati patris ei gratiam contulit, quod pro decem tantum florenis eum emisit et usque ad metas Hungarie sociavit.* Andrić, *op. cit.*, 399: App. No. 6/a.

³⁵The Ottoman guards were given more prominence in the other surviving version of the text: ...*ut solum pro decem ducatis eum abire permisit, ymo, quod maius est, ad metas Hungarie ipsum Thurcus reduxit.* Andrić, *op. cit.*, 400: App. 6/b.

³⁶*Quidam Blasius Saarkan de Chanadino cum uxore per Turcos captus et ad Turciam deportatus, cum ibidem decem annis detentus, duas filias genuisset. Et tandem ultra mare ad sepulchrum Domini venditus fuisset, votum fecit ad sanctum Paulum ... Voto emisso dominum suum zoltanus iugulans una cum uxore et liberis evasit.* Sarbak, *op. cit.*, 94: No. 43.

³⁷Andrić, *op. cit.*, 405: App. No. 14.

grave of God's servant. Repeatedly, he faithfully admitted that if it had not been for God's goodness and the merits of this Blessed Father, he would have never been able to escape from those people's captivity."³⁸ These statements were often heard by masses of people. Bertalan Erdővégi, who was freed by the soldiers from Nándorfehérvár, stood on a pedestal in front of the crowds on the request of the preacher. He gave a lucid and vivid account of his escape as an illustration to the predication sermon.³⁹ It was also a custom to place those mementoes that helped the person escape on the grave of the holy helper. János Garai was not the only one to deposit his shackles as votive offering in the shrine – as also noted by the Hungarian chronicler tradition. This is what Pál the carpenter abducted from Cseri did; he saved the ropes with which his hands and legs had been tied and which he had untied with his teeth, and then took them to Újlak. As it was noted at the time of writing down the miracle, "now they hang by the grave of the Blessed Father."⁴⁰ In another case registered at Újlak we know nothing about the circumstances in which the person escaped. According to the text, someone came during the sermon bringing his shackles with which the Turks tied him and hung it by the saint's grave.⁴¹ The most significant place of pilgrimage were presumably inundated with ropes and shackles that were the products of such circumstances; moreover, some were taken to the most well-known shrines abroad.⁴² One of the entries, for instance, mentions 40

³⁸...*recuperataque sanitate veniens secundum promissionem suam ad sepulchrum viri Dei et merita eiusdem beati patris defuisset (!), nunquam potuisset de captivitate ipsorum liberari.* Andrić, *op. cit.*, 401: App. No. 8.

³⁹After having regained his freedom *de hinc ad Vylak iuxta quod promiserat, quem predicator traxit super ad ambonem iuxta se stare et fecit ipsum alta voce clamare coram omni multitudine ibidem tunc verbum Dei audiencium, quod eodem die Deus omnipotens quo ipsum oravit pro sua liberatione meritis eiusdem beati patris de manibus iniquorum eripisset.* Andrić, *op. cit.*, 402: App. No. 9.

⁴⁰...*venit ad sepulchrum beati patris una cum aliis votivis iuxta promissum suum, portans secum ligaturas illas, que modo stant suspense ante tumulum ipsius beati patris in testimonium sue optate liberacionis...* Andrić, *op. cit.*, 403: App. No. 10.

⁴¹*Quodam die predicante predicatore in claustro de Wylak, affuit quidam portans compedes quibus per Thurcos constrictus fuit ... Compedes ipsi pendent usque modo affixi corrigiis rubeis in Wylak iuxta sepulchrum patris.* Andrić, *op. cit.*, 408: App. No. 17.

⁴²Primarily late medieval German sources mention that Hungarians escaped from Ottoman captivity hung their ropes in the cathedral at Aachen. Elisabeth Thoemmes, *Die Wallfahrten der Ungarn an den Rhein.* Aachen, 1937, 30.

such people, who had been captives in Ottoman lands and went to Újlak on a pilgrimage, most of them brought their shackles to the grave of John Capistran.⁴³

The rope or shackles were always cut by the captive himself and not St Paul, John Capistran or the Virgin Mary. These saints did not show the way home either, or give food, shelter during the days of hiding. Their help and significance manifested themselves somewhere else: they gave strength and endurance in times of danger; they reinforced the most important part of their identity. They strengthened their consciousness as Christians as opposed to the Muslim religion, thus assisted them in their escape. The Ottomans were considered infidels (*infidelissimi*), nefarious (*nephandi, nephandissimi*), savage (*sevassimi*) in the eyes of the abducted and kidnapped Hungarians. Among them they were in danger both physically and spiritually.⁴⁴ This approach is dramatically reflected by the supplication of Pál the carpenter, who pretending to be asleep in the middle of the Ottoman camp, prayed as follows: “Almighty God, show your strength through your servant today. And through the merits of the Blessed Father and brother John Capistran, free me from the hands of the enemies of all Christendom so that I will not perish in eternal damnation, by multiplying my sins and by feeling despair and losing my Catholic faith that I professed in the holy waters of Baptism. Lord, I would rather live in the kingdom of the Blessed than be endlessly tortured in the eternal fire.”⁴⁵ The carpenter abducted from Cseri in Temes county had neither theological qualifications, nor above average consciousness. In the summer of 1461, being tied in a camp by the Danube, naturally he was not the first person to link the notions of Ottoman captivity with eternal damnation. Moreover, referring to the Ottomans as “the enemies of Christendom” was a constant term widely used by people. His prayer

⁴³...*et alii quadraginta captivi, qui omnes capti a Thurcis, fiduciam habentes in Deo ac eius servo beato Capistrano, mirabiliter et misericorditer evaserunt, quorum plurimi suos compedes in memoriam accepti beneficii iuxta sepulchrum dicti patris affixerunt.* Andrić, *op. cit.*, 408: App. No. 18.

⁴⁴Andrić, *op. cit.*, 402–403: App. Nos. 9, 10, 11. Sarbak, *op. cit.*, 92: No. 34.

⁴⁵*Domine Deus omnipotens, ostende in me hodie servo tuo virtutem tuam et per merita beati patris fratris Johannis de Capistrano, libera me de manibus inimicorum tocius christianitatis, ne amissa fide catholica quam professus sum in fonte baptismatis incidam ex multiplicacione peccatorum meorum in desperacionem et inde perveniam ad eternam dampnacionem, plus enim vellem domine regno beatorum perfrui quam eternis ignibus atrociter perpetue cruciari.* Andrić, *op. cit.*, 402–403: App. No. 10.

and the ideas he expressed truly reflected the fifteenth-century Hungarian public opinion.⁴⁶ This way of thinking, complemented by the personal experiences gained in years of captivity, was probably most sensitively expressed by Georgius de Hungaria who was abducted in 1438. In his *Tractatus* published in 1481 he writes as follows: “I will not talk about the unbearable forced labour, the hunger and thirst, the shame of nakedness. I only want to add one thing, that in this slavery the extent and intensity of the bitterness of the soul and spirit can not be compared even to death. What can therefore a miserable soul do when he realises that everything is forbidden that is good and is exposed to everything that is bad. He sees that the enemies of Christ’s cross rules over him. He can also see that the enormous works and duties burden him. He realises that he is separated from Christ’s flock and is thrown in front of the wolves’ claws and mouths. Then, he can also see that he is locked up in an eternal prison, bereft of any hope of release. Finally, he can also see that God has left him, and the Devil has gotten hold of him. One thing is sure, if he was allowed to choose, he would rather choose death than this life.”⁴⁷

As a result of this involuntary cohabitation with the Ottoman Empire, the Hungarian Kingdom provided a steady supply of humans to the Ottoman slave markets throughout the centuries. Starting from the 1390s, tens of thousands of Hungarians had a first-hand experience of what it felt like being separated from the flock and the congregation and being thrown to the wolves – to use the above simile by Georgius de Hungaria. There is an indication of how great their number may have been: in 1483, when Felix Faber, a Dominican monk from Ulm, the author of probably the most popular travel book of his time, visited the Holy Land and Egypt with his travel companions, they met masses of Hungarians as far as in Cairo.⁴⁸ “No sons of any European nation were as numerous there as the Hungarians”, noted Faber in his travel diary.

⁴⁶Pál Fodor, “The View of the Turk in Hungary: the Apocalyptic Tradition and the Red Apple in Ottoman–Hungarian Context,” in *Les traditions apocalyptiques au tournant de la chute de Constantinople*. Actes de la Table Ronde d’Istanbul (13–14 avril 1996) édités par Benjamin Lellouche et Stéphan Yerasimos et publiés par l’Institut Français d’Études Anatoliennes Georges-Dumézil d’Istanbul. (Varia Turcica, XXXIII.) Paris, Montréal, 1999, 99–131.

⁴⁷Georgius de Hungaria, *op. cit.*, 68–69.

⁴⁸*Fratris Felicis Fabri Evagatorium in Terrae Sanctae, Arabiae et Aegypti peregrinationem*. I–III. Edidit Cunradus Dietericus Hassler. Stuttgart, 1843–1849, II. 371–373.

LITIGATIONS FOR OTTOMAN
PRISONERS OF WAR AND THE SIEGE OF BUZSIN
(1481, 1522)

ISTVÁN TRINGLI

In Hungary and Croatia in personal union since the eleventh century, 1526 is the customary date to be referred to as the termination of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the Modern Age. This milestone marked a radical transformation in the relationship between the Hungarian Kingdom and the Ottoman Empire. On the Mohács battleground the Hungarian army sustained a crushing defeat at the hands of Süleyman the Magnificent (1520–1566). A few decades later considerable parts of Hungary and Croatia were drawn under Ottoman dominion. The “age of Ottoman rule” spans from the battle of Mohács to the Peace of Karlowitz (1699) prolonged to the Peace of Požarevac (1718) in the Temesköz region. Ottoman studies in Hungary have concentrated on this period, while the medieval history of Ottoman–Hungarian and Ottoman–Croatian relations was mainly researched by war historians. Therefore, such aspects of the early history of Ottoman–Christian relationship as slave trade has not been investigated yet.

The sources of the following two cases date from 1481 and 1522. Dozens of documents could be found about Ottomans in Hungarian and Croatian captivity. The presence of Ottoman slaves in Hungary also struck the eye of western travellers. In 1502, Vladislav II, King of Bohemia and Hungary (in the latter between 1490–1516) married Anne de Foix of France. The Breton herald Pierre Choque arrived in Hungary in the retinue of the would-be queen. His account of the journey has survived. Writing about Buda and its vicinity, he stressed that “in Buda as well as the entire country many Ottoman captives can be seen.”¹ The

¹*Pour revenir à la beauté de la situation desdictz ville et chasteau de Bude ou y a plusieurs Turcs prisonniers, aussy y a il par tout le Royaume...* The complete text was published by Leroux de Lincy in *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes*. 5e ser. t. II. Paris, 1861.

presentation of the below cases cannot substitute for systematic exploration of sources but may afford an insight into customs of keeping prisoners.

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The source of the first story is a single document which, however, cannot have terminated case. This is not infrequent in the Croatian and Hungarian judicial material; quite the contrary, that is most prevalent. There is no knowing how most judicial procedures ended, documents only surviving of a certain stage of the litigations. Our source is a letter of verdict written in Bihács on April 24, 1481 in the name of László Egervári, *banus* of Dalmatia, Croatia and Slavonia.² The document was compiled from abstracts of several other pieces made in the course of the law-suit but bearing no date.

The earliest documented date in the record is 1479. The *banus* was staying in the "Croatian" (correctly Slavonian) town (*oppidum*) of Lelicski (?) when Juraj Mikuličić went to see him and launched the complaint that Pavao Vokojević, the servant (*familiaris*) of the *banus*, held two Turks unlawfully (*preter omnem viam iuris*). The cases brought to the court of the *banus* were rarely investigated by himself, but he engaged others for the job. László Egervári, the competent judge in all cases of the three countries – Dalmatia, Croatia, and Slavonia – under his jurisdiction, did the same. Claiming to be involved in complicated matters of the king which kept him from administering justice, he delegated count Miklós Blagaj (Blagaj) and the captain of the castle of Kruppa, Ivan Dogonić, to dispense justice. Involvement in the complicated matters of the king was an old formula in Hungarian and Croatian diplomatic practice, meaning in most cases military campaigns.

Hungarian (including Slavonian) and Croatian law were considerably different. As the case affected a Croatian problem, the procedure was subsequently carried on under the prescriptions of Croatian law. Both litigants were noblemen but there were two major differences between them. The words referring to their social status before their names already indicate this difference. The plaintiff is said to be gallant (*egregius*), the

²Archives of the Yugoslavian Academy, XVI-59 (I used its photocopy in MOL DF 231718).

defendant noble (*nobilis*). The adjective *egregius* was due to the affluent, illustrious members of the nobility (called *benepossessionatus*) at the time and Mikuličić belonged to them. He was then the possessor of the castles Buzsin in Slavonia and Ostrovica in Croatia, as well as of a few villages.³ Since he had no sons, he adopted his brother-in-law János Keglevics in 1494.⁴ By virtue of this legal formula, all his fortune was inherited by the Keglevics family. By contrast, the other party in the case, Pavao Vokojenić was merely *nobilis*, a member of the lesser nobility.⁵ The other difference was that Vokojenić was the *banus's familiaris*, that is, engaged in the service of the latter, belonging to his family, as it were.

It is not known whether the two acting judges took on the case immediately or at a later date. As had been customary for long, first the plaintiff – Mikuličić – presented his complaint. He claimed to have bought (*emisset*) two Turks for 1,500 florins earlier, who had escaped from captivity (*furti evasissent de ipsius captivitate*) and were passing the royal castle of Mrsinj (*Merzyn*). Then, however, Vokojenić, the castellan of Mrsinj, captured the two Turks with his own *familiares* and held them as his captives ever since. Thereby the castellan had caused him damage at a value of 1,500 florins. All Vokojenić said in reply was that he had caused no damage by retaining the Turks.

Those were all the arguments the litigants put forth. The judges, however, failed to pass judgement so it went on to the customary next phase in a case: taking oath. Vokojenić had to swear with 24 others on his side that he had caused no damage. The composition of the compurgators was carefully prescribed. Twelve had to be noblemen like him (*nobiles eidem Paulo similes*), the other twelve had to be “noted noble inhabitants of good fame” (*nobiles regnicole noti et bone fame*), while the twenty fifth was the defendant.⁶ The oath was to have been taken on 24 March

³Vjekoslav Klaić, *Acta Keglevichana annorum 1322–1527*. Zagreb, 1917, 43.

⁴*Ibid.*

⁵On the differentiation of *nobilis* – *egregius*, see András Kubinyi, “A középbirtokos kismenesség Mohács előestéjén [The Lesser Nobility Possessing Middle Size Landed Property on the Eve of the Battle at Mohács],” in *Magyarország társadalma a török kiűzésének idején* [The Society of Hungary at the Time of the Expulsion of the Ottomans]. (Discussiones Neogradienses, 1.) Salgótarján, 1984, 9–10.

⁶In Croatia, affluent nobles were called *nobiles bone opinionis et bone fame*. Under Croatian common law, only they could be compurgators when it came to affirmation by oath; Klaić, *op. cit.*, 36.

1480, in the town of Osztrozsác (*in oppido Ozthrosach*). From this point on, the case may have implications for legal history alone, as nothing else can be learnt about the fate of the Ottoman prisoners.

At the set date, however, Vokojenić was in the service of the *banus*, so the oath was postponed to the week after the arrival of the latter at Bihács. But Vokojenić was again with the *banus*, this time in the town of Ljevac in Bosnia (*in regno Bozne in oppido Lewach*) together with the king, so the plaintiff was waiting in vain. The judges set another date, January 20, 1481. As was customary in Croatia, four minions were delegated to be present at the oath. The delegation of the minions took place by a letter in Croatian (*in lingua Sclava*) also including the text of the oath, but in the document of the *banus* the Latin translation was put down. The minions answered the *banus* in another document stating that Mikuličić had waiting for Vokojenić in vain for three days. The verdict was eventually taken on behalf of the *banus* on April 24, 1481. Vokojenić was sentenced to either returning the two Ottomans or paying 1,500 florins to Mikuličić.

Posterity remains ignorant about a lot of details. When and where were the two Ottomans captured, who were they at all, from whom did Mikuličić buy them? Nor is anything known about the circumstances of the deal, or about their fate after the verdict. Though not mentioned in the document, it can be figured out that they probably escaped from Buzsin. When someone had two castles, he probably did not keep his expensive prisoners in a village house. Ostrovica – in former Lapac district, now next to Kulen Vakuf – is out of the question, for it would have made no sense to go northward through the mountains, along a tenuous bypass. There was but a single road under Mrsinj from Buzsin, although it was circuitous. The captives probably thought it would be hard to cross the Una unnoticed, so they headed for the mountains and wished to proceed parallel with the river, but to their ill luck, they bumped into their new captor. They are highly likely to have been taken into Croatian captivity in the battlegrounds in Bosnia or Serbia, or they were seized by the Christians during a Croatian or Slavonian raid. It is hard to presume that they were captured during the 1479 campaign into remote Transylvania. They may have been in Hungarian or Croatian captivity for years. One thing is certain: they were not bought as slaves in the classical sense. The labour power of two people, even if they were masters of special crafts,

was not worth that much money. In Croatia – as well as Hungary – slaves had not been sold and bought for over one and a half centuries then.

Now, Mikuličić either gave 1,500 florins in cash for the two prisoners or accepted them in return for an old debt. The value of a prisoner, when he was no servant, was determined by his ransom. The most instructive moment of this document is indeed the extremely high price which was almost certainly identical with their ransom. 1,500 florins was an enormous sum, whether we compare it to later ransoms or that-time prices.⁷ The extraordinary tax levied in those years amounted to an annual one florin, so the value of the two captives equalled the annual royal tax of 1,500 peasants.⁸ One may entertain the doubt that Mikuličić said a larger sum to the court than could be expected in ransom. Although this possibility cannot be precluded, it is noteworthy that the castellan of Mrsinj did not question the amount. Vokojenić did not deny his deed, nor did he detail it why the captured Ottomans were his due. Since Mikuličić had bought them, it would not have made much sense, anyway. The prisoners were the property of the owner, and neither the king, nor the *banus* acting for the king in Croatia, or the castellan had any rights to them. That the escapees were captured by the Mrsinj people had to please Mikuličić. He only complained because he did not get them back, charging the other party with retention and detention of the prisoners. Vokojenić probably wanted to get the ransom himself, and, as a servant of the *banus*, he hoped for his patronage. In 1480, there was indeed a campaign going on in Bosnia in which he had to take part, but he failed to appear in court on other occasions as well.

As the document reveals the treatment of Ottoman prisoners had its well-established customs already at the time of King Matthias (1458–1490). Not only a ransom was required but they were also bought and sold and even litigated about.

⁷See the list of ransoms for Ottoman prisoners in Nógrády's article in the present volume. In the mentioned royal register there are three instances for 1495 that the treasury contributed minor subsidies to the redemption of Croatian prisoners in Ottoman captivity. The full amount of ransom, however, is not known from these entries, but they could not have been too high. For example, a sum of 100 florins was added to the ransom of the *castellanus* of Bihács by the king. Johann Christian Engel, *Geschichte des Ungarischen Reichs und seiner Nebenländer*. I. Theil. Halle, 1797, 157–158.

⁸Pál Engel – Gyula Kristó – András Kubinyi, *Magyarország története 1301–1526* [A History of Hungary 1301–1526]. Budapest, 1998, 239.

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The adventures of Ottoman prisoners detained in the castle of Buzsin again are the subject of another document dated forty years later, but this time, the event assumed nationwide political importance. The castle had been owned by the Keglevics family for years, called the Keglevics's of Buzsin since 1503.⁹ In 1521, Péter Keglevics became the *banus* of Jajca. On August 29, 1521, the castle of Belgrade fell. After the capture of the most important Hungarian frontier fortress in the south, the outer defence line in existence for a hundred years then could not be defended for long. How pervasively the imminent Ottoman attack imbued the thinking of the people in the region is exemplified by a possessory action of Péter Keglevics.

In 1523 Keglevics obtained a few estates near Zagreb in pledge. Documents about agreements of the kind were always formulated in keeping with strict prescriptions. This time, however, a so-far unknown condition was also added to the customary reservations: Should the estates and their peasants be devastated and plundered by the Ottomans, the pledgee could lawfully sue the pledger to get the value of the pawn.¹⁰ It is worth noting the wording: no occupation but devastation by the Turk is mentioned. Slavonia had been living with the constant Ottoman menace for generations, and although the Turkish incursion became an imminent threat, the occupation of the country was not yet thought of. Péter Keglevics did not just incidentally reckon with the Ottoman plundering at the time of signing the contract. As one-time commander of Jajca, he knew the situation along the frontier, but even so two years earlier his estates had sustained grave tribulations.

The Ottoman prisoners held captive in Buzsin insidiously (*per insidias*) broke out of the prison and killed the guards. The capture of Belgrade filled them with audacity. They did not flee towards Bosnia but established themselves in the castle. The *banus* of Dalmatia, Croatia, and Slavonia, János Korbáviai (Ivan Krbavski) thought he did not have

⁹Klaić, *op. cit.*, 51.

¹⁰*Predicta castra, ville, possessiones sessionesque iobagionales ac earundem pertinencie per infidelissimos Thurcos crucis Christi inimicos ... desolari et exspoliari utcumque contingerit...*; Klaić, *op. cit.*, 63.

enough troops to besiege Buzsin and began to negotiate with the Turks. He ensured their free retreat in return for the castle, detaining the more illustrious ones (*potiores*).

The adventurous liberation of the captives from Buzsin occurred sometime in late 1521 or beginning of 1522. The chapter of Csázma issued the first document about the case on January 26, 1522.¹¹ A month later the matter was already before the king who ordered the estates of Croatia and Slavonia to investigate the case. Keglevics then turned against János Korbáviai and took the side of those who were planning to topple the *banus*. From that point on, the analysis of the story only has conclusions for domestic policy in store.¹²

Several moments remain in obscurity, though. The prisoners must have numbered quite a few, as they dared to challenge the *banus*, but their exact number is not known. Did Keglevics transport the Ottomans captured around Jajca to this place or did they get there in some other way? Nor is it clear what the aim of the mutinous prisoners was by capturing the castle. They would have been waiting in vain for Ottomans to arrive from the other side of the frontier. There were several castles south of Buzsin in possession of the Christians. In winter, it was senseless to hope for a campaign that would take all these castle at one go. They probably did not immediately leave because the people in the vicinity must have noticed them and encircled the castle. After that, breaking out would not have been advisable as they could have easily been captured in the open fields. They had to resort to resistance. Their tactic proved fortuitous: the *banus* let them go. It is noteworthy that János Korbáviai retained some wealthy prisoners. Either he could not resist the temptation seeing the noble Turks and breached his promise by capturing them, or they let some prisoners go for ransom and retained the rest until the

¹¹Klaić, *op. cit.*, 53.

¹²MOL DL 32610. In connection with the castle of Kruppa, Keglevics accused János Korbáviai three days prior to the issue of the diploma without mentioning the Buzsin case that he had called the Ottomans into Croatia to have support in putting down his adversaries, the armies of Imre Török of Enying, Ferenc Beriszló, and the widow of János Corvinus; Klaić, *op. cit.*, 55, 57. The relationship between Keglevics and Korbáviai must have been hostile even in 1523. That must have been referred to in the deed of pledge when mentioning the possible onslaught “by some barons in Slavonia or Croatia” (*per aliquem huius regni Sclavonie aut Croatie potentem*) apart from the Turkish assault.

redeeming money arrived. In the second instance, Korbáviai simply took away a part of Keglevics's wealth.

It is certain that the prisoners were kept for their value and their release was not regarded as a matter of politics. When János Korbáviai agreed with the Turks, Keglevics's relatives, who had marched to the castle, protested to the *banus*. Keglevics first reconciled himself to the loss and gave the *banus* a certificate that his measures were correct when he had let the Turks go. Certificates were required when someone was indebted to the other. By releasing the prisoners, the *banus* caused damage. A month later, Keglevics changed his mind and interpreted the affair in this light: the looting of the castle and release of the Ottomans were injustice (*praejudicium*) and damage (*damnum*).

A LIST OF RANSOM FOR OTTOMAN CAPTIVES IMPRISONED IN CROATIAN CASTLES (1492)

ÁRPÁD NÓGRÁDY

During the course of the fifteenth century, lists of ransoms must have been made by the hundred, few of them surviving long enough to be cherished as informative historical sources. Most of them disappeared and this is only partly attributable to the Ottoman occupation of the southern areas and to the ensuing demise of medieval cultural treasures including written records. The main reason for that was that such lists, together with private correspondence and financial accounts, were called to life by everyday needs. They were not legal certificates, and unlike the title deeds which were in theory valid for ever (*in perpetuum*), they only had relevance to the original owners, the new generation(s) not being interested in preserving them.

As far as I know, there is a single register at our disposal concerning prisoner trade in Hungarian history before 1526 (the year of the decisive battle with the Ottoman army at Mohács). The 1492 list presented here enumerates the ransoms paid for Ottoman prisoners held captive and capable of redeeming themselves in three fortresses along the river Una: Bihács, Ripács and Szokol.¹ The lucky circumstances of its survival can be easily reconstructed. Namely, the *registrum* got into the Archives of the Hungarian Chamber as part of the Nádasdy family's documents, from where it was incorporated in the collection of medieval Hungarian sources together with the rest of the pre-1526 material at the end of the

¹At that time the three strongholds belonged to the defensive line of fortresses protecting the southern frontier of medieval Hungary. The original of the *registrum* is found in MOL DL under No. 26055. Published in *Alsó-szlavóniai okmánytár. (Dubicza, Orbász és Szana vármegyék) 1244–1710* [Southern Slavonian Documents. Counties of Dubicza, Orbász, and Szana, 1244–1710]. Ed. by Lajos Thallóczy – Sándor Horváth. Budapest, 1912, 342–344. The register is mentioned by András Kubinyi, “Belpolitikai változások 1490–1516 [Changes in Domestic Politics, 1490–1516],” in Pál Engel – Gyula Kristó – András Kubinyi, *Magyarország története 1301–1526* [A History of Hungary 1301–1526]. Budapest, 1998, 348.

last century, when the Diplomatic Archives was formed.² Before reaching its present location, however, it travelled through three family archives. It first moved when László Egervári (*banus* of Dalmatia–Croatia–Slavonia in 1476–1482 and 1489–1493)³ died and his documents, together with his estates, went to György Kanizsai, the second husband of his widow Klára Rozgonyi in 1496. As the family died out on the spear side, it was inherited by Tamás Nádasdy when he received the hands and immense fortune of Orsolya Kanizsai.⁴

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The register is a sheet folded longitudinally and written up densely on all four sides. Its experienced scribe put it down in Bihács about the names and ransoms of 21 Ottoman prisoners. The captives seem to have been carefully sorted out; 7 were kept in each castle: Bihács, Ripács, and Szokol. The date of compiling the list is certainly identical with the date of their liberation (May 10, 1492) as the heading states they are persons who have redeemed themselves. The list does not include the place and date of their capture, but in two-thirds of the cases it notes the original abode of the prisoners. Let us start with the latter.

Places of origin of the prisoners

In fourteen cases are names of settlements entered in the list, most probably indicating their residence. Conspicuously enough, these places are in a relatively small area in today's northern Greece, within 100 km of the mouth of the river Vardar:

²Iván Borsa, "A Magyar Országos Levéltár Mohács előtti gyűjteményei 1882–1982 [The Pre-Mohács Collections of the National Archives of Hungary 1882–1982]," *Levéltári Közlemények* 53 (1982) 4.

³About Egervári's tenure as *banus*: on October 15, 1476 he was already (DL 45666) and on August 21, 1482 he was still (DL 107054) in office, and on November 21, 1489 (DL 25401) he was again and on July 8, 1493 (DL 106867) he was still there.

⁴On the connections between the Egervári, Kanizsai, and Nádasdy families, see Ede Reiszig, "A Kanizsaiak a XV. században [The Kanizsais in the Fifteenth Century]," *Turul* 55 (1941) 22–31, 71–81 and Erik Fügedi, *A 15. századi magyar arisztokrácia mobilitása* [The Mobility of Fifteenth-Century Hungarian Aristocracy]. Budapest, 1970, 87.

- a. Yanissar = Yenişehir (today Larissa): 3 persons;
- b. Zarygewlly = Sarıgöl (today Ptolemais, 20–30 km west of Servia): 6 people;
- c. Karafferia = Karaferye (Veroia/Veria): 1 person;
- d. Vardar = Yenice-i Vardar (today's Giannitsa some 30 km north of the mouth of the Vardar): 4 people.

These settlements were all centres of Ottoman *kazas* where troops were most probably stationed as well. Since the settlements are close to the Aegean Sea and it cannot be conceived that in the late fifteenth century Hungarian troops raided so deep into the Empire, one is led to presume that the listed prisoners were more affluent members of an incursion led from the northern areas of today's Greece toward Croatia and Slavonia.

This assumption is corroborated, on the one hand, by the sizeable sums noted in the list, and on the other, by the high share of cash (*imprompto*) paid as ransom. Statistically speaking, at least 15 prisoners bailed themselves off for 100 golden florins, one for 120 florins and two for 190 – including fabrics calculated in florins – but the lowest amount was also as high as 80 florins. The price for freedom was indeed very high, especially when one knows that, for example, the estate of 17 Ottoman soldiers who died in the autumn following the occupation of Székesfehérvár in 1543 totalled 5,156 *akçe* or 103 golden florins.⁵ What one may carefully conclude from the Székesfehérvár data somewhat removed in time from the register is that the annual pay of the Ottoman soldiers, hardly in excess of the 24 florins of a Hungarian foot soldier or 36 florins of a *hussar*, could never produce the ransom listed in the register.⁶

⁵The estate of Ottoman soldiers in Székesfehérvár is cited by Klára Hegyi, *Török berendezkedés Magyarországon* [Ottoman Rule in Hungary]. (História könyvtár. Monográfiák, 7.) Budapest, 1995, 178–179.

⁶About the pay of Ottoman soldiers: Hegyi, *op. cit.*, 89, 179. At the same time, some of the most combat-worthy Hungarian troops, the mounted soldiers in the church *banderia*, were given an annual 55–60 florins, but they probably only received full pay at times of mobilisation. For instance, the 100-strong contingent of the Veszprém episcopacy cost the bishop 4,600 florins, 100 barrels of wine, and 1,000 shocks of corn a year: László Kredics – László Solymosi, *A veszprémi püspökség 1542. évi urbáriuma* [The 1542 *urbarium* of the Veszprém Episcopacy]. (Új Történelmi Tár) Budapest, 1993, 90.

Hence the greatest part of the redemption of 2,287 florins paid partly in cash and partly in the practically hoarded precious fabrics must have been derived from earlier successful marauding expeditions.⁷ The reader of the register cannot help wondering today whether the 21 prisoners mentioned without rank yet paying considerable ransom were exceptionally affluent or that wealth was typical of the *akincis* plundering the Hungarian border areas. Since the southern part of medieval Hungary, first of all the Szerémség (Syrmium), was among the richest areas of the kingdom, it would not be surprising to find the latter assumption verifiable.

Even the lowest ransoms in the list equalled the annual census of a major Hungarian market town. In 1520, Csepreg paid 72 florins in tax, the annual land rent of Bazin and Szentgyörgy in the significant vine-growing region in Pozsony county was 75 and 79 florins, respectively.⁸ In 1516–1520 the subsistence of the 20-strong personnel of the castle of Ónod cost no more than 100 florins and the ransom of Erdoğmuş or Eynehan (190 florins both) would have covered the six-month running costs of Sárvár, a significant grandee residence in Transdanubia.⁹

The mention of oriental fabrics and garments in the list is also noteworthy. What lends special importance to the entries is the scribe's thoughtfulness in giving the value of each piece in golden florins – be it a bolt of velvet interlaced with golden thread, a black cloak adorned with purple flowers, or a silk belt.

The process of the liberation of the captives can also be inferred from the list. They resorted to the well-established post-1526 practice of prisoner trade: a few of them went home to collect the ransom with the permission of the captors (and those remaining guaranteeing their return).¹⁰ At home they collected in cash and in expensive fabrics the

⁷The total of 2,342 at the end of the list must be a mistake, but for some “uncertain” entries the 2,287 florins computed by the present author must also be taken as approximate.

⁸Csepreg's total census: DL 26222; those of Bazin and Szentgyörgy: DL 32682.

⁹For the evidence on Ónod, see Béla Iványi, “A tiszaluczi vám bevételei és azok felhasználása 1516–1520-ig. (Bevezetésül a tiszaluczi rév- és vámjog történetébe) [The Income of the Tiszalucz Customs and its Use. (An Introduction to the History of the Customs and Tolls of Tiszalucz],” *Magyar Gazdaságtörténelmi Szemle* 13 (1906) esp. 26–37. For Sárvár, see the accounts of 1520 in the first place: DL 37327.

¹⁰In detail, see Géza Pálffy's study in the present volume.

required amount for themselves and their fellow prisoners and returned with it. In this case each group of prisoners was allowed to send a “released” person, but we do not know the principle of selection. All that can be deduced is the fact that the persons to be sent home were not the wealthiest. Murad, an elderly Daud and another Murad proved worthy of their companions’ trust.

There is but a single name of the keepers of the prisoners mentioned in the list, a certain Petar Antolović (Petrus Antholowich) of Croatia. He appears to have been in service in the castle of Bihács, 4 of the 7 Ottoman prisoners in the fort enriched his fortune with over half a thousand florins. Who were the owners of the other captives? Most probably *banus* László Egervári. At that time, he was not only the commander of Bihács in his capacity as *banus* but had acquired the fortress sometime between the autumn of 1490 and August 20, 1491 for 12,000 golden florins in pledge.¹¹ Although on February 6, 1493 King Vladislav II made him exchange the castle for two former Rozgonyi estates, Vitány and Csókakő in Fejér county, at the time of the writing of the list he was one of the top dignitaries of the area and the owner of Bihács together with its town and belongings.¹² It is also striking that shortly after the compilation of the list, Egervári himself was at Bihács from where he sent instructions to the chapter of Zagreb.¹³ Why did he turn up in the stronghold along the Una? Upon whose instruction, and why, was the list compiled at all? Remembering that the register went to the archives of the Egervári family, then from that and the details it may be concluded that the *banus* visited Bihács to get his part of the redeeming money and had the list

¹¹According to the explanation in the royal deeds of pledge, László Egervári got the castles of Bihács and Kruppa to recompense him for two years’ arrears in his salary. The precise date of pledging is unknown but the king mentioned it in Várpalota on August 20, 1491 as Egervári’s possessions: DL 19746. For the 12,000 florins in pawn paid for Bihács: DL 19957 and DL 19818.

¹²He returned the two strongholds to Vladislav on February 6, 1493 the latest, and since he consented to a reduction by 3,000 from the pledged amount of 20,000, he received the forts Vitány and Csókakő for 17,000 florins. (Fógel’s remark that Bihács and Kruppa remained in Egervári’s possession is erroneous: József Fógel, *II. Ulászló udvartartása (1490–1516)* [The Household of Vladislav II]. Budapest, 1913, 14.)

¹³DL 33200. What confirms Egervári’s presence is the fact that as against a lot of documents written on behalf of him but signed and stamped by his deputies, the mandate in question was issued with his own seal.

attached to the rest of the local accounts by his local household steward put in the family *conservatorium*.¹⁴

As was noted above, the list does not give the place or date of capturing the prisoners. All one may risk to presume under such circumstances is that the list is perhaps the “side-product” of the Ottoman–Hungarian clash also noted by Antonio Bonfini in his recollection of László Egervári. The humanist historiographer praised the valiance of the baron who died in late 1495: “He was a glorious captain in Silesia and Luzica; later he testified to such gallantry and courage in Dalmatia, Illyricum, and Croatia that he placed a memorable blow on the Ottoman army, killing five thousand of their troops...”¹⁵

LIST OF TURKS REDEEMING THEMSELVES, OF THE AMOUNTS AND
VALUABLE GOODS I RECEIVED FOR THEM ON THE THURSDAY
FOLLOWING THE APPEARANCE OF THE ARCHANGEL MICHAEL IN 1492

First: Eynebeyi paid 100 florins in cash, he was here in Bihács.¹⁶

Also: Two Turks, namely Erdoğmuş and Eynehan, the prisoners of Petar Antolović here in Bihács, paid 290 florins in cash and three bolts of gilded velvet worth 90 florins

Also: Murad, who went to Turkey for the rest of Petar Antolović’s Turkish prisoners, gave three bolts of gilded velvet worth 90 florins.

Also: these three were entreating him¹⁷ [to dispense with] another bolt of velvet worth 30 florins.¹⁸

¹⁴As the handwriting of the list is completely different from the accounts of the castle of Egervár, it is certain that the scribe was not the book-keeper of the family residence. Cf. e.g. DL 26054.

¹⁵Antonius Bonfini, *Rerum Ungaricarum decades...* IV. Ed. by József Főgel – Béla Iványi – László Juhász. Lipsiae, Budapest, 1941, 264 (5. 4. 173). Cf. Antonius Bonfini, *A magyar történelem tizedei* [Decades of Hungarian History]. Translated by Péter Kulcsár. Budapest, 1995, 996 (5.4.170).

¹⁶Bihács (Croatian Bihač): fortress and town along the Una, today in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

¹⁷I.e. with Petar Antolović.

¹⁸That is the possible meaning of the “item”. It is however unsettled who the three “above-said” persons are to whom the demonstrative pronoun (*isti*) refers. Preceding this

Also: Hüseyin, who dispensed boots¹⁹ and was here [in Bihács], gave 80 florins in cash.

Also: Mansur, who was here in Bihács, gave 93 florins in cash as well as a *zakrapach* and a silken belt commonly called *zkender*, worth [a total of ?] 7 florins,²⁰ and a pair of boots.

Those who were in Ripács²¹

First: Ali from Sarigöl gave 44 florins in cash and a bolt of gilded velvet worth 50 florins, and for the promised attire he gave a bolt of red velvet.

Also: Yusuf from Sarigöl gave 68 florins in cash and a bolt of gilded velvet worth 30 florins, as well as a rug worth 2 florins.

Also: Musa from Sarigöl gave 70 florins in cash and a bolt of gilded velvet worth 30 florins.

Also: another Ali, also from Sarigöl, gave 94 florins in cash and a Serbian *kamuka* worth 6 florins.

Also: Turgud from Sarigöl gave 80 florins in cash and a red velvet dress worth 15 florins and two rugs worth a total of 5 florins.

Also: Haydar from Sarigöl gave 77 florins in cash and a dress worth 20 florins, adorned with purple flowers on black background and a rug worth 2 florins.

Also: the old Daud, who went to Turkey on behalf of the rest of the prisoners in Ripács, gave 33 florins in cash and a bolt of gilded velvet, as well as three rugs worth a total of 7 florins.

entry, there are four prisoners listed by name, and peculiarly enough, at the bottom of page 2r an “excess” bolt of velvet given to Petar Antolović is also mentioned. Should the two remarks refer to one and the same case, then Ali from Vardar also contributed to the extra bolt of cloth, but in that case, the reference to the three persons is even vaguer.

¹⁹The clause *qui disponebat chismas* is possibly to be interpreted that Hüseyin, similarly to Mansur following him in the list, partly redeemed himself by giving boots.

²⁰*Zakrapach*: I could not identify this word which is probably of Slavic origin. *Zkender*: probably Iskender, meaning Alexander, which, however, cannot be connected to clothing in modern dictionaries.

²¹Ripács (Croatian Ripač): fortress along the Una, south-east of Bihács, in today’s Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Those who were in Szokol²²

First: Alagöz from Yenişehir gave 87 florins in cash and a gilded *kamuka*, and a rug worth 13 florins.

Also: Mehmed from Vardar gave 100 florins in cash.

Also: Süleyman from Vardar gave 100 florins in cash.

Also: Ali from Vardar gave 31 florins in cash and a bolt of gilded velvet, a *zkender* worth 4 florins as well as 15 florins to the bolt [of velvet] the Turks of Petar Antolović gave and remained in debt.²³

Also: Osman from Yenişehir gave 86 florins in cash and a bolt of gilded red velvet worth 14 florins.

Also: Deli Musa from Yenişehir gave 50 florins in cash and two bolts of velvet worth a total of 40 florins, one of them adorned with white flowers, the other with black flowers in a red field, as well as a *zkender* worth 6 florins and two rugs totalling 4 florins.

Also: Murad from Vardar, who went to Turkey on behalf of the rest of the Turks in Szokol, gave 60 florins in cash and a bolt of gilded velvet worth 30 florins and a *zkender* worth 10 florins.

Also: Aramaday from Karaferye, who was Petar Antolović's prisoner here, in Bihács, gave 94 florins in cash and a bolt of gilded velvet worth 26 florins.

The total amount of cash in florins:	1,670 ²⁴
The value of goods in florins:	662 ²⁵

²²Szokol (Croatian Sokol): fortress along the Una, south of Bihács, in today's Bosnia-Herzegovina.

²³That is, he contributed 15 florins to the delivered cloth. The last part of the "item" is somewhat problematic (see note 18). The relative pronoun *qui* of *qui superflue erant* ought to be *que* correctly (for they owed the bolt [*petia*]).

²⁴Correctly: 1,637 florins.

²⁵In theory, the sum would be 650 florins, but on the one hand, the scribe did not note the price of all items taken over, and on the other, it is unsettled whether the 15 florins mentioned with Ali from Vardar is to be included in the value of the velvet noted with Murad in Bihács or not.

RANSOM SLAVERY ALONG
THE OTTOMAN–HUNGARIAN FRONTIER
IN THE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES

GÉZA PÁLFFY

Introduction

In 1682 the military court (*sedes bellica*) of the border fortress of Fülek convened to discuss a peculiar matter. Twelve prisoners who had been released on suretyship from the Turkish dungeons in Várad, had requested the professional opinion of the court. As their petition stated, while the twelve men had been begging together their ransoms, their fellow prisoners – who were their guarantors – had dug themselves through the walls of the prison and made their escape. Some of them had never been caught; but others had been recaptured by the Ottomans and returned to their dungeon cells. The twelve prisoners on release were now asking the military court whether or not the recaptured prisoners continued to be their “bailsmen”. Ever since the Treaty of Adrianople (Edirne) in 1568, the Ottoman–Hungarian peace treaties had provided that neither party was required to return prisoners freed with the help of God. However, in this particular case the military court decided that the recaptured Christian prisoners were not new prisoners but old ones who had been returned to their cells. Thus, from this point on, only the recaptured persons could be considered to be the guarantors of the twelve prisoners on release. When issuing its ruling, the military court pointed out that it had deliberated on the matter “by referring to examples of some ordinary things and by recalling and complying with the old custom existing between the Hungarian and Turkish border fortresses.”¹

¹MOL Esterházy cs. lvt. [Archives of the Esterházy family] P 125, Pál nádor [Palatine Paul Esterházy] No. 11.378. The affair is mentioned in Géza Pálffy, *Katonai igazságszolgáltatás a királyi Magyarországon a XVI–XVII. században* [Military Jurisdiction in Habsburg–Hungary in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries]. Győr, 1995, 144.

Although research into the Habsburg–Hungarian system of border fortresses and Ottoman–Hungarian relations has produced some fine results, a comprehensive and detailed elaboration of the customs in the marches (*Grenzbräuche*),² including an exposition of the old order existing between the Hungarian and Turkish border castles cited above, is still lacking. Even the Hungarian historian Sándor Takáts, who knew much of the frontier warriors and the ways in which Ottomans and Hungarians coexisted, failed to treat the subject in a systematic manner.³ Thus, while his works contain valuable and useful data, they have never been presented in monographic form. Furthermore, his essays on the subject were greatly influenced by the pro-Turkish and anti-Habsburg attitudes that largely determined – and sometimes even distorted – Hungarian historiography for many years.

In defence of more recent researchers, we can state that they faced the difficult task of reconstructing a system of common law of the border fortresses which – unlike the customary law of the nobility as formulated in István Werbőczy's *Tripartitum* – was never codified in writing. Nevertheless, a reconstruction of these customs can be instructive, for these traditions existed only temporarily (for a period of 300 years) and were soon forgotten after Ottoman rule ended in Hungary in the late seventeenth century. This article does not attempt a systematic survey of all the related issues, it merely tries to bring together some important elements of Ottoman–Hungarian common law and customs along the borders, including the characteristic features of slavery and the trade in captives, based on new documentary evidence from the Budapest and Viennese archives.⁴

²For example in his decree of November 17, 1652, King Ferdinand III (1637–1657) ordered Ádám Forgách, border fortress captain-general of Érsekújvár, to appoint Miklós Révay to the office of vice-captain *dem Gräniczbrauch gemeß*. MOL Forgách cs. lvt. [Archives of the Forgách family] P 287, Series II. Fasc. HH. (42. cs.) fols. 288–289.

³Sándor Takáts, “Török–magyar szokások a végekben [Ottoman–Hungarian Customs in the Marches]”, in Idem, *Rajzok a török világból* [Sketches from the Turkish World]. II. Budapest, 1915, 213–238.

⁴For previous literature, see Néda Relković, “Embervásár a török időkben [Slave Market in the Ottoman Period],” *Századok* 44 (1910) 113–121. Sándor Takáts, “Magyar rabok, magyar bilincsek [Hungarian Captives, Hungarian Shackles],” *Századok* 41 (1907) 415–435, 518–540. Idem, “A török és a magyar raboskodás [Ottoman and Hungarian Captivity],” in Idem, *Rajzok a török világból* [Sketches from the Turkish World]. I. Budapest, 1915, 160–303 (this is a study abundant in valuable data, but it does not

provide a systematic description of the ransom taking system, and its evaluations sometimes seem to be too naive). Aleksandar Solovjev, "Trgovanje bosanskim pobjem do god. 1661.," *Glasnik Državnog muzeja u Sarajevu, Društvene nauke*. Nova serija 1 (1946) 139–162. József [László] Kovács, "Török rabszolgák Sopronban, soproniak török rabságban a 17. század folyamán [Ottoman Slaves in Sopron – Citizens from Sopron in Ottoman Captivity in the Seventeenth Century]," *Soproni Szemle* 13:1 (1959) 6–11. Edit Izsépy, "Rablevelek a váradi török börtönből [Letters of Captives from the Turkish Prison of Várad]," *Az Egyetemi Könyvtár Évkönyve* 5 (1970) 315–327. Gábor Dobos, "Török–magyar rabok a nyugat-dunántúli végeken [Ottoman–Hungarian Captives in the Western Transdanubian Marches]," *Studium II. Acta Juvenum Universitatis Debreceniensis de Ludovico Kossuth Nominatae*. Debrecen, 1971, 63–73. Sergij Vilfan, "Die wirtschaftlichen Auswirkungen der Türkenkriege aus der Sicht der Ranzionierung, der Steuern und Preisbewegung," in *Die wirtschaftlichen Auswirkungen der Türkenkriege. Die Vorträge des 1. Internationalen Grazer Symposions zur Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte Südosteuropas (5. bis 10. Oktober 1970)*. (Grazer Forschungen zur Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte, 1.) Ed. by Othmar Pickl. Graz, 1971, 177–199. Edit Izsépy, "Az egri törökök fogságába esett magyar rabok kiváltásának és szállításának problémái [Problems of Liberation and Transport of Hungarian Captives Captured by the Turks of Eger]," *Agria: Annales Musei Agriensis* 11–12 (1974) 159–169. Pavo Živković, "Mletačka trgovina bosanskim robljem u srednjem vijeku," *Godišnjak Društva Istoričara Bosne i Hercegovine* 21–27 (1976) 51–58. Danilo Klen, "Pokrštanje »turske« djece u Rijeci u XVI i XVII stoljeću," *Historijski zbornik* 29–30 (1976–1977) 203–207. Bogumil Hrabak, "Skopskiot pazar na robje vo XV i XVI vek," *Glasnik. Institut za nacionalna istorija* 24 (1980) 151–161. László Fenyvesi, "Az igali portya és a körmendi kótyavetye balkáni tanulságai. (Adalék a hódoltsági rác-vlach-iflák-vojnok problematikához, 1641) [The Balkan Aspects of the Hungarian Raid on Village Igal and the Auction in Körmend (Some Data to the Problem of Serb, Vlach, Eflak, and Voynuk Population in Ottoman Hungary)]," in *Magyar és török végvárak (1663–1684)* [Hungarian and Ottoman Border Fortresses (1663–1684)]. (Studia Agriensia, 5.) Ed. by Sándor Bodó – Jolán Szabó. Eger, 1985, 199–218. János J. Varga, "Rabtartás és rabkereskedelem a 16–17. századi Batthyány-nagybirtokon [Keeping of and Trade in Captives on the Batthyány Estates in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries]," in *Unger Mátyás Emlékönyv* [Festschrift for Mátyás Unger]. Ed. by E. Péter Kovács – János Kalmár – László V. Molnár. Budapest, 1991, 121–133. Idem, "Gefangenenehaltung und Gefangenenehandel auf dem Batthyány-Grundbesitz im 16.–17. Jahrhundert," *Burgenländische Heimatblätter* 4 (1995) 145–162. Hajnalka Tóth, "Török rabok Batthyány I. Ádám uradalmaiban [Turkish Captives on the Estates of Ádám Batthyány I]," *Aetas* 2002/1, 136–153. – For the most important captive letters, songs, and diaries, as well as other documents relating to the keeping of captives, see Fr[anjo] Rački, "Dopisi izmedju krajiških turskih i hrvatskih častnika," *Starine* 11 (1879) 76–152; 12 (1880) 1–41. Pál Jedlicska, "XVI. századi török–magyar levelek Pálffy Miklóshoz [Ottoman–Hungarian Letters to Miklós Pálffy in the Sixteenth Century]," *Történelmi Tár* (1881) 691–705. Farkas Deák, "Okiratok a török–tatár rabok történetéhez [Documents on the History of Turkish and Tatar Captives]," *Történelmi Tár*

Customs of slavery along the frontier during the Ottoman rule

Trade in slaves constitutes a particularly interesting and vivid chapter in the history of Ottoman–Hungarian relations. Two main types of historical periods may be distinguished in the course of a development that lasted for centuries. Periods belonging to the first type were characterised by military offensives, while more peaceful years belonging to the second type were characterised by raids and skirmishes into enemy territory. During periods of the first type, e.g. the sixteenth-century military offensives of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent (1522–1566) or the great war against the Ottomans in the late seventeenth century (1683–1699), both sides captured large numbers of men – who were then sold off at distant slave markets (Sarajevo, Istanbul) or purchased by Austrian noblemen and Italian merchants (Venetians, Florentines, etc). During periods of the second type, comprising much of the history of Ottoman–Hungarian relations (e.g. 1466–1520, 1568–1591, 1606–1663), the two sides traded captives for ransoms. This trade was a direct consequence of the coexistence of the two powers in the border zone and was closely connected to the incursions (perpetrated by both sides) into enemy territory. This phenomenon was not unique to Hungary. A similar development may be observed in other frontier areas of the Ottoman Empire such as North Africa and the Polish–Russian region, as well as in the Mediterranean.⁵

Ransom slavery along the Ottoman–Hungarian frontier reached its peak during the long period of peace (1606–1663). Indeed, it would seem

(1886) 110–126. Géza Dongó Gy[árfás], “Magyar rabok és rabnők török–tatár fogságban [Hungarian Captives in Turkish and Tatar Captivity],” *Adalékok Zemplénnvármegye történetéhez* 16 (1910) 87–91, 152–155, 281–284, 331–333; 17 (1911) 78–81, 179–181, 314–315; 18 (1912) 88–91, 230–231, 289–291; 19 (1913) 76–77, 162–163, 249–251, 333–335; 20 (1914) 62–64, 169–171, 263–266; 21 (1915) 81–83, 146–148, 263–266; 22 (1916) 50–52. *Auer János Ferdinánd pozsonyi nemes polgárnak héttoronnyi fogságában írt naplója 1664* [The Diary of Johann Ferdinand Auer, Citizen of Pozsony Written during his Captivity in the Yedikule 1664]. (Fontes historiae Hungaricae aevi Turcici, 1.) Ed. by Imre Lukinich. Budapest, 1923. *Wathay Ferenc énekes könyve* [Songbook of Ferenc Wathay]. I–II. Ed. by Lajos Nagy. Facsimile edition. Budapest, 1976 and *Rabok, követek, kalmárok az oszmán birodalomról* [Captives, Envoys, and Merchants on the Ottoman Empire]. Published by Lajos Tardy. Budapest, 1977.

⁵See with more literature Mária Ivanics’s and Pál Fodor’s studies in the present volume.

that this method of acquiring and keeping captives became a profitable business amid the chaotic conditions created by the Fifteen Years' War (1591/93–1606). A similar development can be observed during the earlier Turkish wars of the sixteenth century (1526–1566) and the Christian war of re-conquest in the late seventeenth century (1683–1699). Given the incessant warfare and large numbers of uprooted people, including inhabitants of the “militarised” market towns (*oppida*) and settlements as well as the destitute soldiers of the border fortresses, it was not difficult to find armed men who would take captives during raids or kidnap men, women, and children for money. This is well demonstrated by a special contract drawn up in the summer of 1655 between Márton Toldy, juryman (*iuratus assessor*) of Veszprém county, and the warriors of the border fortress of Veszprém which stipulated if “God grants them fortune and they bring from my property (an estate in Tolna county under Ottoman rule), which I have given to them, people, cattle, horses or cash, half shall belong to the warriors, and half shall be mine. And if the warriors shall feel so inclined, they may receive money for their service, and the captives shall be mine. Given the first condition, they shall not select the best of the captives, but shall bring them here, where they will be divided into two.”⁶

On the Ottoman side such kidnappers were mainly the *martaloses*⁷ “assisted” in ever growing number by the so-called *pribeks*.⁸ By this time,

⁶MOL Fördös cs. lvt. [Archives of the Fördös family] P 1754, Tétel 59. fol. 5. An excellent indication of the extent of the kidnappings for ransoms is provided by a report of damages stating that between 1633 and 1649 the Ottoman border fortress soldiers captured or killed 4,207 persons in the Kanizsa district alone, while they also took 4,760 cattle. At the same time, however, they burnt “only” 66 houses to the ground. MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. [Archives of the Batthyány family] P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok [Documents pertaining to the Turks] No. 230. fol. 173.

⁷With more literature, see Milan Vasić, *Martolosi u jugoslovenskim zemljama pod turskom vladavinom*. (Akademija nauka i umjetnosti Bosne i Hercegovine, Djela XXIX; Odjeljenje istorijsko-filoloških nauka, 17.) Sarajevo, 1967.

⁸The word is of South Slavic origin (cf. *pribegnuti* = refuge) and means “refugee”. Contrary to the view of Sándor Takáts (“A pribékek [*Pribeks*],” in Idem, *Rajzok*, I. 310–311) and in agreement with the findings of Ferenc Szakály (*Mezőváros és reformáció. Tanulmányok a korai magyar polgárosodás kérdéséhez* [Market Town and Reformation. Studies in the Early Hungarian Burgher Development]. [Humanizmus és reformáció, 23.] Budapest, 1995, 260: note 227), we should consider the henchmen to have been first and foremost kidnappers and marauders rather than “professional” spies.

members of the two groups were involved less in the supply of slaves to distant markets than in the kidnapping of men for ransom. Even though the Hungarian border captains had ordered that men who settled on enemy territory in order to make a living from kidnapping should be severely punished, more than a few men did chose this way of enriching themselves. If they subsequently fell into Christian hands, two possible fates awaited them. Where border captains applied the rules strictly, on the basis of chapter 15 of part I of István Werbőczy's *Tripartitum*⁹ – see, for example, the case of the nobleman Pál Soltész, who was sentenced by the military court (*sedes bellica*) of Upper Hungary in 1665 and who “of his own freewill and under no duress, while abandoning his Christian faith, had become a Turkish *pribek* ... (and then) along with other henchmen had taken Christians captives, bringing them to the Turkish fortress Eger” – such brigands could expect to be mercilessly tortured and then impaled, which was the usual punishment for such crime.¹⁰ Sometimes, however, commanders might choose to spare a captured informer for themselves if he promised to refrain from kidnapping activity and to work instead as an informer, or more accurately as a double agent. Although the captains had been promised by the ruler a reward of 24–30 florins for each *pribek* executed,¹¹ they would show mercy if there was some hope of securing even greater booty in future raids based on the information gained.

The upsurge in ransoming and kidnapping activity in the seventeenth century clearly indicates the potential of the frontier slave trade. The beginnings of this peculiar form of commerce go back to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and its significance is exemplified by the fact that members of the illustrious Batthyány family levied ransoms on their Turkish captives amounting in total to several tens of thousands of florins, although we know that these ransoms were rarely or only partially

⁹This chapter of the *Tripartitum* provided for the hanging of thieves and the implement or breaking on the wheel robbers. *The Customary Law of the Renowned Kingdom of Hungary: A Work in Three Parts Rendered by Stephen Werbőczy (The “Tripartitum”)* (Decreta regni mediaevalis Hungariae, Series I, vol. 5.) Ed. by János M. Bak – Péter Banyó – Martyn Rady. Budapest, 2005, 68–69.

¹⁰MOL Csáky cs. lvt. [Archives of the Csáky family] P 71, Fasc. 264. Tétel 5. Sedes bellica, October 19, 1665, Kassa. Cf. also Dongó, “Magyar rabok,” (1915), 263–266: No. XLIX.

¹¹Takáts, “A pribékek,” 310–311.

remitted.¹² Indeed, later on, the provision of board and lodging for the many captives had become a serious problem for the prison warders of the fort owned by the Batthyánys in Németújvár, even though several other rooms had been arranged for the men in buildings close to the dungeons.¹³ The following table indicating the number of Christians held captive in the largest prison of Ottoman Hungary, the so called *Csonka Torony*, or “Stump Tower” in Buda¹⁴ demonstrates the culmination of this development in the middle of the seventeenth century.

Table 1¹⁵

The number of Christian captives in the Stump Tower in Buda

Year	Number of captives
1636	57
1650	107
September 8, 1652	45
1652	40

¹²Varga, “Rabtartás és rabkereskedelem,” 126. Some similar and mainly Slavonian examples: Vilfan, “Die wirtschaftlichen Auswirkungen,” 183–192. Ransom slave trade developed into a very profitable business for the Ottomans, too. For example, between 1644 and 1647, the cash ransoms of the 178 Christian soldiers captured from the border fortresses in the Kanizsa district amounted to more than 64,600 florins. Varga, *op. cit.*, 133: note 40.

¹³MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1314, Missiles Nos. 41.223, 41.225 and 41.258. Cf. also Ödön Kárfy, “Hírek a kanizsai török rabokról [News about the Ottoman Captives in Kanizsa],” *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 13 (1912) 473: No. I (1563).

¹⁴Figuring as *carcer Budimensis* in Latin documents issued by the Ottomans, as *turris, quem curtam et intectam vocant* in Latin, as *gestutzter Turm* in German and as *kula* in Ottoman texts; cf. MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1314, Missiles No. 9294. Szakály, *op. cit.*, 277: note 283. *Auer János naplója*, 120 and MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1314, Missiles Nos. 9290, 9305, 26.681, 31.526 and 48.556.

¹⁵For the sources of this table, see: MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1314, Missiles Nos. 9277, 9282, 9284, 50.740, 7763, 9289, 9292, 9297–9298, 9302, 9305 and Imre Nagy, “A budai csonkatorony pecsége [The Seal of the Stump Tower of Buda],” *Századok* 2 (1868) 661–662 and Lajos Fekete, *Budapest a törökkorban* [Budapest during the Ottoman Rule]. (Budapest története, 3.) Budapest, 1944, 161. In 1687, there were 300 Christian prisoners in the fortress Eger, while in 1679 70 captives were being held at Székesfehérvár. Izsépy, “Az egri törökök,” 159 and Károly Jenei, “Iratok Fejér megye török hódoltságkori történetéhez [Documents on the History of Fejér County during the Ottoman Rule],” *Fejér Megyei Történelmi Évkönyv* 6 (1972) 206: No. 34/a.

Year	Number of captives
1654	116
June 14, 1657	224
October 4, 1657	220
1658	180
1661	235

The acquisition and public auction of captives

In times of peace the greatest opportunities for the acquiring of captives were provided by the raids into enemy territories, the aims of which also included the taxation and plundering of the land, the stealing of local cattle and horse stocks. We know much about such practices,¹⁶ but a special type of action mentioned in the contemporary sources does require some explanation, if only because it seems to have been one element of the wider system of customs connected with the raids. Such actions are designated in Latin by *expansis (explicatis) vexillis* or in Turkish by the less accurate phrase *bayraklar ile* or *ve bayrak ve borular ile*; they were attacks carried out with “unfurled flags” which proved very lucrative in terms of the numbers of captives taken and the booty acquired.¹⁷ In the course of the attacks, the raiders – Ottomans and Hungarians alike – set out openly, without disguising their plans, for enemy territory in great numbers. Carrying their respective flags, they proceeded to plunder the land. Such actions went beyond the scope of

¹⁶Sándor Takáts, “A török portya és a magyar portya [The Ottoman Raid and the Hungarian Raid],” in Idem, *Rajzok*, I. 336–358 and recently Lajos Gecsényi, “A végvári harcok taktikája. (Török lesvetés Győr alatt 1577-ben) [Tactics of the Frontier Wars (Ottoman Raid on Győr in 1577)],” in *Scripta manent. Ünnepi tanulmányok a 60. életévét betöltött Gerics József professzor tiszteletére* [Studies in Honour of József Gerics on the Occasion of his 60th Birthday]. Ed. by István Draskóczy. Budapest, 1994, 165–175.

¹⁷Damásd, 1640: MOL Magyar Kancelláriai Levéltár [Archives of Hungarian Chancellery], A 97, *Hungarica et Transylvania, Rác Károly halálával átvett iratok* [Legacy of Károly Rác], 22. cs. fol. 116. Examples concerning the Ottomans: Ludwig Fekete, *Türkische Schriften aus dem Archive des Palatins Nikolaus Esterházy 1606–1645*. Budapest, 1932, 138–139: No. 45 and Kiskomárom, 1644: MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok No. 101.

ordinary raids; they could have been interpreted as open violations of the peace treaties.¹⁸

Christian and Ottoman subjects (soldiers and civilians) who were captured during the raids were taken to prisons located on the territory of the opposing empire. A captive's fate was primarily determined by his family background or by his rank and importance in the military hierarchy.¹⁹ The so-called "major captives" from the Hungarian side were first and foremost members of the greater, middle, and sometimes lesser nobility (e.g. Ferenc Bebek or Ferenc Wathay) or military officers of senior rank (the border fortress generals, captains, and senior officers, e.g. János Krusics, captain-general of the border fortresses guarding the mining towns along the river Garam, and Mihály Sárközy, captain of Ajnácskő) as well as "political prisoners" (e.g. Bálint Török or István Majláth). As the "Emperor's slaves" and gifts to the sultan, they were mainly taken to Constantinople, or sometimes to the dungeons of one of the governors (*beylerbeyi*) in Hungary (e.g. the Stump Tower in Buda). During the first century of the Ottoman rule, Hungarian prisoners transported to the sultan's capital would be enjailed in the so-called Black Tower of Galata in the northern part of the imperial city (known in Turkish as *Galata kulesi* and in Latin as *turris Maris Nigri* and described in Hungarian as *galatai nagy torony*, *Konstantinápoly ellenébe*, or *az Fekete-tenger mellett az Fekete Torony, Konstantinápolyon kívül, Galata városában*),²⁰ or in the *Rumeli hisari*, which had been built by Mehmed the Conqueror (1451–1481) to control the Bosphorus. Christian prisoners referred to this place in their letters as *Újvár* i.e. New Castle. (In Turkish it was known as *Yeni hisar/Jaynyzzar* or as *Bogaz kesen*, in Hungarian as *Az Bokož keze nevű torony az Fekete-tenger parton*, and in Latin as *castellum novum non procul a Constantinopoli, novum castrum penes*

¹⁸The letter of Şahin Hasan, *beylerbeyi* of Kanizsa, to Ádám Batthyány: *Ibid.*, No. 75/c.

¹⁹In addition to Takáts, "A török és a magyar raboskodás," *passim*, see also *Rabok, követek, kalmárok*, 27–28.

²⁰References in chronological order: *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*. V/2. İstanbul, 1993, 1214/120 and 151; 1556: MOL Magyar Kincstári Levéltárak [Hungarian Treasury Archives], MKA Nádasdy cs. lvt. [Archives of the Nádasdy family] E 185, Letter of György Sennyey to Tamás Nádasdy, October 18, 1556, Constantinople; 1604: *Wathay Ferenc énekes könyve*, I. 4 and 1562: Takáts, *op. cit.*, 176.

Nykra mare or *turris Bokoz-Kezy penes Nykra mare*).²¹ In addition, prisoners were also kept in St Paul's prison also located in Galata (*des Turckhischen Khaysers Gefenckhnuss zu Sanndt Pauls, zu Galattha*),²² while some "political prisoners" were incarcerated in the "Seven Towers" located on the south-western outskirts of Istanbul (*Jedikule/Jedikula*, known in German as *Schloss Jedi Kula* or *Sibentürme/Siebenthürm*)²³ as early as the sixteenth century. However, at that time, this latter building served primarily to house the state treasury; it was only in the course of the following one hundred years that it became a notorious prison for Christian captives. At the same time, Hungarian prisoners were also put in the imperial arsenal prison (known in Turkish as *Baba Cafer zindanı*, in Italian as *Bagno*).²⁴ As against their comrades in jails of Ottoman Hungary, prisoners held here were unlikely to be granted freedom, owing to their distinguished backgrounds or else for political reasons. Less valuable captives who ended up in Istanbul were rarely held with those for whom large ransoms were expected. Instead they were sold immediately as ordinary or galley slaves.²⁵

²¹For the various Turkish names: *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, VI/2. 1214/44; the distorted form of the year 1550: Georgius Pray, *Epistolae procerum regni Hungariae*. II. Pozsony, 1806, 203–204: No. 89; 1563: MOL Zichy cs. lvt. [Archives of the Zichy family] P 707, Missiles No. 8375 (an unpublished letter of György Bebek from his prison cell); 1545: Takáts, "A török és a magyar raboskodás," 171: note 3. 1562: Takáts, "Magyar rabok, magyar bilincsek," 432: note 4 and 1563: *Ibid*.

²²In 1563 Wolfgang Schreiber was imprisoned here: *Documente privitoare la istoria Românilor*. II/I. 1451–1575. *Cu portretul lui Iacob Heraclid despot voevod*. Ed. by Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki. Bucuresci, 1891, 468–472: No. CCCCXXIX. For Schreiber's imprisonment, see recently: Szakály, *op. cit.*, 87–88.

²³*Auer János naplója*, 199. According to Hans Dernschwam, in the mid-sixteenth century Bálint Török, István Majláth and László Móré were held captive here, although at the same time many Christian prisoners lived in Galata, in the tower by the sea. Hans Dernschwam, *Erdély – Besztercebánya – Törökországi útinapló* [Diary of Travels in Transylvania, Besztercebánya and the Ottoman Empire]. Ed. and translated by Lajos Tardy. Budapest, 1984, 202, 244.

²⁴*Sein wir unnterhalb des Arsenalns ausgesetzt und in die aldaige kays. gemeine Gefängnus, Bagno genandt, welches in 2 Theil getheilt, nämlich der Russen, und Frenken Bagno, worin über 2000 und mehrers Gefangene sih befinden, geführt* (1663). *Auer János naplója*, 187–189 and 209–210: No. 1. Cf. Takáts, "Magyar rabok, magyar bilincsek," 418.

²⁵Sándor Takáts, *Komáromi daliák a XVI. században* [Valiant Soldiers of Komárom in the Sixteenth Century]. Budapest, 1909, 42–43.

It is not surprising therefore that Christian prisoners greatly feared being sent to the Ottoman capital city. One such prisoner, Gyurka Horvát from Magasi in Vas county, who was held in the Stump Tower in Buda, even spread rumours of his own death and pretended to be someone else in order to avoid shipment to Constantinople.²⁶ The prison warders were fully aware of this and would often mention to a prisoner the possibility of his transport to Istanbul in order to increase the amount of ransom offered.²⁷ Things were little different in prisons located on Christian territory, where if a gaoler was dissatisfied with the amount of ransom offered by a prisoner, he would threaten to send him to Vienna.²⁸ Once he was in Vienna, a prisoner had little chance of ever being able to return to the Ottoman Empire, for Turkish prisoners taken to the city usually ended up as servants to the court of one of the imperial dignitaries or on the banks of an Italian commercial galley.

Like the Turkish “Emperor’s captives”, high-ranking Ottoman officers were taken to the prison of the court of the Hungarian kings. From the 1560s, border fortress captain-generals paid by the ruler found themselves under the following strict requirement: “By God’s permission, if the warriors should get some prey during battles with the enemy ... the captain-general is bound to divide up the booty among the warriors evenly, satisfying himself with the gift he is due, and keeping for us the pashas, *beys*, and *ağas*, if such can be caught.”²⁹ It was under these

²⁶In his letters to Ádám Batthyány, however, he calls himself by his proper name. This all tends to suggest that the letters of the captives were not always “censored” by the Ottoman gaolers. MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1314, Missiles Nos. 20.020, 20.021. Cf. also: A Turkish prisoner in Németújvár in 1646 contrived in the same way, as “he calls himself sometimes İbrahim and sometimes Ömer in his vacillating speech.” *Ibid.*, No. 41.244.

²⁷*Ibid.*, No. 23.882. Kanizsa (1634) At the fortress of Eger in 1658, after escape of one of the prisoners on release, several of his fellow prisoners were taken to the Porte, so that higher ransoms and sureties could be obtained from the others. Izsépy, “Az egri törökök,” 162.

²⁸E.g. MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1314, Missiles No. 41.219.

²⁹This customs was also known in Transylvania. See Sándor Takáts, “A hadi kótyavetye a török világban [War-Auction in the Turkish World],” in Idem, *Rajzok a török világból* [Sketches from the Turkish World]. III. Budapest, 1917, 147. The earliest evidence in Latin known by me comes from the instruction of Simon Forgách, border fortress captain-general of the mining district, issued on October 26, 1569: *Proinde supremus noster capitaneus milites suis manubiis (Passis tamen, Zansakis et Beghis Turcicis exceptis, quos nobis reservamus) pro militari in Hungaria diu iam observata consuetudine frui sinat et humaniter eos tractet, contentus nimirum, si ei honestum munus de*

provisions that in 1583 Ali *bey* of Koppány, captured by the soldiers of Veszprém and Palota, was transferred to Emperor and King Rudolf II (1576–1608), who donated him immediately to his devotee, *Obersthofmeister* Leonhard IV. von Harrach.³⁰ Both the Hungarian and Ottoman border fortress soldiers were unhappy that their respective emperors demanded the best captives for themselves (as some kind of *de facto* prisoner tax). Indeed, there were cases – for instance in 1587 after both the Koppány and the Kacorlak actions – in which the soldiers refused to comply with the ruler’s orders and lodged complaints in connection with the more valuable captives’ being sent up to Vienna.³¹ However, their requests were never met, and thus they were left with the option of concealing the capture of high-ranking Ottoman officers – a tactic that was not necessarily more successful, given that the Ottoman leadership was inclined to approach the Court in Vienna or the Aulic War Council when seeking freedom for distinguished pashas or *beys*.

Consequently, for soldiers on both sides, the real prize became the so-called “ordinary captives”. The Christians considered as such the lesser noblemen possessing only limited wealth, while on both sides ordinary captives included the lower rank officers of the border fortresses (vice-captains, second-lieutenants, voivodes, corporals, or *alaybeyis*, *odabaşıs*, and *ağas*) and the common soldiers. Such men were taken to the two imperial capitals only in exceptional cases. Usually they were imprisoned in the neighbouring *vilayet* or *sancak* centres, or in the larger Hungarian fortresses, whence after many years of captivity they would return to their native lands, thus enriching their owners considerably. As the above table concerning the number of Christian prisoners in the Stump Tower shows, they were far more numerous than the major captives. By the seventeenth century the ransom slave trade had developed into a major area of business.

The third large group of prisoners in the Hungarian theatre of war (on both sides) comprised peasants and ordinary soldiers of peasant origin serving in the border fortresses. Great numbers of such men were taken

qualibet praeda ab hostibus reportata impartietur. ÖStA HKA Hoffinanz Ungarn rote Nr. 21. 1570. Aug. fol. 106.

³⁰See Ferenc Szakály’s study in the present volume.

³¹The ruler denies the handing over of Receb *bey* of Koppány: *Ibid.* and Sándor Takáts, “Berenhidai Huszár Péter [Péter Huszár from Berenhida],” in *Idem, Régi magyar kapitányok és generálisok* [Old Hungarian Captains and Generals]. Budapest, [1928²], 314–317.

captive by *martaloses* and Tatars in the first half of the sixteenth century and by soldiers of the imperial forces during the war of re-conquest. The aim of their capture was not ransom income but their sale at the slave markets of Constantinople or to German and Italian merchants. Once they had been taken to the seraglios, the courts of the nobles, or the galleys, their only hope for freedom lay in divine intervention. Nevertheless there were some who managed to return to their native lands. Such men included the Christian galley slaves who made their escape during the battle of Lepanto in 1571,³² or learned men (e.g. Georgius de Hungaria, Bartholomaeus Georgievits or György Huszti from Raszinya) who, having won their freedom, enriched contemporary Europe's knowledge of the east with fantastic "accounts of their adventures".³³

People captured during the raids were divided up by the soldiers of the border fortresses in various ways. In some cases – as mentioned in connection with the warriors of Veszprém – the division was made on the basis of prior (or sometimes subsequent) agreements drawn up with the Hungarian lords of the plundered areas or with the border captains.³⁴ If the raiders came from various border fortresses and the booty or number of captives was substantial, then, similarly to a modern auction, the military booty, goods, livestock, and captives (the latter being regarded as material objects) were sold off and the proceeds divided among the soldiers proportionately to their participation. This process was designated in Hungarian by the phrase *kótyavetye* of South Slavic origin (Latin: *auctio*, German: *Beutverkaufung* or *Austeilung*).³⁵ Registration

³²Ferenc Szakály, "L'espansione turca in Europa centrale dagli inizi alla fine del secolo XVI," in *I Turchi il Mediterraneo e l'Europa*. Ed. by Giovanna Motta. Milano, 1998, 133–151.

³³*Rabok, követek, kalmárok*, passim.

³⁴In 1647 the foot soldiers of Kiskomárom "began bargaining with my lord captain", during the course of which they managed to persuade him to be satisfied with 60 florins from the prey (instead of 100 florins). Béla Iványi, *Végvári élet a Dunántúlon a XVII. században* [Life in the Transdanubian Marches in the Seventeenth Century]. Budapest, 1958, 47; cf. MTA Kt. Ms. 5301/7.

³⁵More rarely the booty would be divided among the border soldiers according to the "number of horses or swords", i.e. proportionately but without an auction. János J. Varga, *Szervitorok katonai szolgálata a XVI–XVII. századi dunántúli nagybirtokon* [The Military Service of the *servitors* on the Large Transdanubian Estates]. (Értekezések a történelmi tudományok köréből, Új sorozat 94.) Budapest, 1981, 109: note 85 and Takáts, "Magyar rabok, magyar bilincsek," 533.

and assessment of the booty and the captives, their sale, and the subsequent division of proceeds (known as *kótyavetyepénz* or *Beutgeld*) were all performed by commissioners elected by the soldiers (known in Hungarian as *kótyavetyések*, in German as *Beutmeister*, and in Latin as *licitator* or *persona auctionem curans*), who were assisted by a number of scribes. In a manner similar to the oath of a judge (*juramentum*), the commissioners had sworn to carry out their task in an impartial manner.³⁶ The soldiers of the border fortresses also gave their word – as they did after the raid on Igal in 1641:³⁷ “God help me, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Holy Trinity, one certain God. Given that I left my home beside Lord Ádám Batthyány against the Turkish enemy, if I found something, gained or drew it, be that from a Christian, Turk or Serb, I would give it up. If I got information of some profit in the hands of someone else, I would tell it.”³⁸

At the auctions, in accordance with the ruler’s provisions cited above, the border fortress troops granted each border captain one valuable captive; indeed, after particularly successful actions, prisoners were also granted to the border fortress captain-generals and the ruler himself. The size of the “honest gift” (*munus condecens* or *honestum*)³⁹ to be made – which was at least as large as that due to a common soldier⁴⁰ – was then determined by the border fortress captains. All this could be traced back to a custom that had become established among the troops of the big landowners by the middle of the sixteenth century. According to the custom, the head and keeper of the soldiers, that is the lord, was entitled to

³⁶MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok No. 51. fol. 10. For the contemporary judges’ oath, see Ferenc Kovács, *A magyar jogi terminológia kialakulása* [Formation of the Hungarian Legal Terminology]. (Nyelvészeti tanulmányok, 6.) Budapest, 1964, 95–120. For the duties of the auctioneers, see also Ábel Ödöngő [Sándor Takáts], “Nyelvtörténeti adatok. Kótyavetyés [Data on the History of the Hungarian Language: The Auctioneer],” *Magyar Nyelv* 6 (1910) 132.

³⁷For a detailed account of the lessons of the Igal raid, see Fenyvesi, “Az igali portya”.

³⁸MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok No. 51. fol. 10.

³⁹The first expression is used in the instructions of Imre Bornemissza, captain of Krasznahorka, issued in 1573: MOL MKA Diversae instructiones, E 136, Tétel 7. fol. 540, the second in the cited instructions of 1569 by Simon Forgách, captain-general of the mining district: ÖStA HKA Hoffinanz Ungarn rote Nr. 21. 1570. Aug. fol. 106.

⁴⁰Iványi, *op. cit.*, 49. Cf. Varga, *Szervitorok*, 108–109.

receive a third of all captives.⁴¹ This amount could not be withheld by the fighting troops. However, this element of customary law developed in a different manner in the royal border fortresses.

The ruler and the border fortress captains realised in the middle of the sixteenth century the value of incorporating the rule of the third into the system of customs under development in the royal border fortresses. During the period of Ottoman occupation, they made various attempts to introduce such a “tax” – which would have been similar to the one-fifth (*pencik*) levied by the Ottomans. However, their efforts were vigorously and repeatedly opposed by the fortress warriors, who regarded exemption from seigneurial or state taxes as an important aspect of their collective rights and privileges (which also included an independent administration of justice).⁴² Seeking to avoid a drawn-out conflict, the War Council finally refrained from introducing the tax in the second half of the sixteenth century, for it was unable to assure the proper remuneration of the soldiers. Subsequently, the military command in Vienna had to suffice with the receipt of the major captives (in accordance with the captains’ instructions), while the commanders of the border fortresses received only gifts. On the other hand, among both the private soldiers of the seigneurs and the inhabitants of the so-called *haiduck* settlements, the giving of a third was still a custom even in the second century of Ottoman era. Even so, among the *haiducks*, the giving of a third was required only where military service was performed for money rather than for privileges.⁴³

Thus, throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the division of military booty and of captives often gave rise to disputes. The significance of the issue was well demonstrated at a military court (*sedes bellica*) convened in Körmend in July 1647 by Ádám Batthyány, captain-general of the border fortress district facing Kanizsa. The court debated

⁴¹Takáts, “A hadi kótyavetye,” 146. Cf. also from 1566: Kárfy, *op. cit.*, 473–474: Nos. II–III.

⁴²Pálffy, *Katonai igazságszolgáltatás*, 71–72.

⁴³Hernádnémeti, 1630: Imre Dankó, *A Sajó–Hernád-melléki hajdútelepek* [The *Haiduck* Settlements Along the Rivers Sajó and Hernád]. Sátoraljaújhely, 1991, 22 and István Szendrey, *Hajdú-szabadságlevelek* [Letters of Privileges for the *Haiducks*]. Debrecen, 1971, 233: No. 6; Fehértó and Bekény, 1632: *Ibid.*, 239–240: No. 9; Lúci, 1642: *Ibid.*, 252: No. 18.

the problem and issued various directives in connection with it.⁴⁴ Referring to “established customs”, the council confirmed that the soldiers of the royal border fortresses – in accordance with the size of their spoil – owed simply “reasonable gifts” (*munus concedens*) to their captains and were not required to grant them a third. This statement was needed because some fortress commanders in an abuse of their power, had even resorted to the use of force in order to obtain the third from salaried soldiers of the ruler. At the same time, in connection with the private soldiers, the judges of the military court reaffirmed the earlier custom and upheld the requirement to give a third. In addition, they determined that in the course of an auction, military booty was to be divided in proportion to the numbers of guards of the various border fortresses, and that those obtaining booty after “hearing word from others” were to receive only half the amount per man. They also declared that soldiers who brought back a Turkish head or a captive from the raid were to receive an additional sum of three florins over and above the amount due to them from the proceeds of the auction.⁴⁵ Those, however, who did not heed the calls of their fellows and refrained from participating in the raids, or who purposely delayed their departures, were deserving of punishment rather than of gain. An auction was always to be held in the border fortress whose soldiers who had participated in greatest numbers in the incursion, but only after the fortress captain or the border fortress captain-general had been informed.⁴⁶

Subsequently, the border fortress captain-generals and the commanders of the fortresses attempted to use this latter decree, which was based on the old customs, to persuade the royal soldiers of castles under their command to recognise their (non-existent) right of pre-emption in connection with the distinguished captives. This practice can likewise be traced back to the customs of the soldiers of the private landowners. Such soldiers were only allowed to sell their captives once the *dominus* had given his permission and made his purchases. An excellent formulation of this demand can be found in a statute of the landlords of Keszthely issued

⁴⁴MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Katonai iratok 252. cs. fols. 622–625.

⁴⁵This decree followed very old traditions that continued to survive after the ending of the border fortress systems at the time of the independence movement of Ferenc Rákóczi II: “A soldier who brings back a captive from among the enemy shall receive a clear three florins.” Takáts, “A hadi kótyavetye,” 179: note 1.

⁴⁶For this practice, see also Varga, *op. cit.*, 110.

in 1661 where it is stated that “people and warriors living in Keszthely, whoever’s servants they may be, who win something with weapons: captive, cattle, and good weapon, should sell it to the lords at a good price, so that anyone of them may buy it.”⁴⁷ The three lords even attempted to introduce the right of pre-emption (binding only the private soldiers earlier) among soldiers of the border fortresses in the pay of the ruler. Thus, when in 1652 the army of Kiskomárom (near Lake Balaton) protested against this practice they did so in vain, for Ádám Batthyány informed them in no uncertain terms that “if they bring a good captive, it is our due alone.”⁴⁸

As regards the purchase and sale of captives, another noteworthy legal regulation became established by the end of the seventeenth century: the vendor was required to give a certain “warranty” for the captive being sold. If, for instance, the captive died within fifteen days of sale, the vendor was required to pay back the full price to the purchaser. This custom came into being because many of the captives that were taken prisoner were injured or fell ill while they were in prison. Many owners sought to sell them on as quickly as possible. Despite the practice of a two-week term of warranty, disputes did arise, especially where there was no written record of the sale. In 1654, for instance, Ferenc Csáky, captain-general of Veszprém, and the soldiers of the nearby fortress of Tihany became involved in such a dispute. The quarrel began when the captain-general bought an injured Turkish captive from the soldiers for 500 florins and the man died just fifteen days later. Csáky attempted to recoup his money by (illegally) arresting the soldiers of Tihany (who were not under his jurisdiction) and demanding his money back in his own judicial forum, the military court (*sedes bellica*) of Veszprém. At the court, the border fortress soldiers referred to the “customs of the border fortress soldiers”, but they did so in vain for the captain-general denied that there had been any word of a two-week expiry date in their original verbal agreement. Acting under pressure, the military court judged in favour of Csáky. Subsequently, the soldiers of Tihany lodged an appeal at the military court of the captain-general of the border fortress district of Győr. At this court the ruling was made in favour of the soldiers of

⁴⁷Sándor Kőszeghy, “Keszthelyi rendtartás 1661-ből [The Statute of Keszthely from 1661],” *Magyar Gazdaságtörténelmi Szemle* 2 (1895) 64: article 6.

⁴⁸Varga, “Rabtartás és rabkereskedelem,” 124.

Tihany; the judges invalidated the Veszprém court's decision, and even reprimanded Csáky for seriously abusing his authority as captain.⁴⁹

Opportunities for freedom: escape, conversion, payment of ransom

Captives sold at the auctions were usually bought by the generals of the border fortress districts or by affluent fortress captains and officers. Common soldiers on both Ottoman and Christian sides kept no prisoners because they could not afford to pay the gaolers (Latin: *custos carceris*, German: *Tömlizer*, *Kerkermeister*) or the castellans (Hungarian: *porkoláb*, Latin: *castellanus*, German: *Burggraf*) for their upkeep. The fee was called the “prison ransom” (*tömlöcváltság*, *Tömnizgeld*); it was to be paid by the owner of a captive on or before his release from prison.⁵⁰ Problems concerning payment of this sum sometimes arose when a Turkish slave was exchanged for a Christian one. (In one such case, Ádám Batthyány forgot to pay off his prison warders of Némétújvár.)⁵¹ Still, gaolers on both the Turkish and Christian sides were unlikely to destitution, given that by the middle of the seventeenth century – owing to their not always “peaceful” practices – it had become customary on the borders for prisoners to pay a “gratuity” to them on release. Thus, in 1660, as both sides were attempting to regulate (unsuccessfully as it turned out) some customs concerning the keeping of slaves, it was solemnly pronounced that “castellans and gaolers, both Turks and Hungarians, should not take gifts from the poor captives, but should be satisfied with their due [namely the prison ransom].”⁵²

⁴⁹MOL Csáky cs. lvt. P 71, Fasc. 273. Köteg I. fols. 27–31. For a detailed account of the affair, see Varga, *Szervitorok*, 158–159 and Pálffy, *Katonai igazságszolgáltatás*, 122–123.

⁵⁰MOL MKA Acta diversarum familiarum, E 200, Tétel 22: Szigeti Horváth cs. lvt. [Archives of the Horváth family from Sziget], Letter of István Henyes and Boldizsár Ányos to Márk Horváth. March 16, 1551, Sümeg; cf. Ferenc Szakály, “Egy végvári kapitány hétköznapijai. (Horváth Márk szigetvári kapitány levelezése Nádasdy Tamás nádorral és szervitoraival, 1556–1561) [Everyday Life of a Fortress Commander (Correspondence of Márk Horváth, Commander of Szigetvár with Palatine Tamás Nádasdy and his *Servitors*, 1556–1561),” *Somogy Megye Múltjából (Levéltári Évkönyv)* 18 (1987) 57; further data: MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1314, Missiles 34.785, 41.253.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, No. 41.234 (1650).

⁵²*Ibid.*, Nos. 9299 and 7761.

Captives that passed into the ownership of a senior officer or captain by way of purchase, exchange, or as a gift could win their freedom in a number of ways. Rarely, this occurred through a “miraculous act of God and without paying a ransom” – as in the case of Pál Farkas, a man who escaped from Szigetvár after he had murdered his gaoler.⁵³ Under the terms of the Treaty of Adrianople (1568) and according to customary law, neither party could demand back such fugitives. Nevertheless, those who were caught while attempting their escape were punished severely. For example, in the late autumn of 1652, thirty-eight Turkish captives from Szalónak in West Hungary revolted, but were brought back to their cells by armed guards. The vengeance of the gaolers was merciless. Apart from the injured, all those who had attempted to escape were thrashed (300, 350 or 380 strikes), which proved fatal for many.⁵⁴ News of the rebellion, which caused a considerable loss to Ádám Batthyány, spread quickly. In January 1653 the captives of the Stump Tower in Buda learnt of it, too. (Indeed they also suffered its consequences for the Ottomans introduced stricter rules concerning the return of the captives who had been released from the Batthyány fortresses on bail.)⁵⁵ Since a primary element of the Ottoman–Hungarian customary law was the principle of reciprocity – according to which if either party contravened the traditions (e.g. forbade begging or tortured the prisoners excessively) the other party was entitled to treat its own prisoners in the same way⁵⁶ – the

⁵³Kálmán Szily, “Farkas Pál és Farkas Ádám följegyzései 1638-tól 1694-ig [The Records of Pál Farkas and Ádám Farkas from 1638 to 1694],” *Történelmi Tár* (1884) 88–89.

⁵⁴Janissary Hüseyin of Buda “was beaten on December 4 and 5, 1652 because he had participated in the capture of our fortress Szalónak and he had escaped; on December 8, 1652 he died.” MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok No. 49. p. 72.

⁵⁵MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1314, Missiles No. 9286. A year earlier they had received word of the battle of Vezekény, and mourned their fallen fellows in their cells. *Ibid.*, No. 9284.

⁵⁶“Should the bailsmen in Hungary receive a single trash, he [the *bey* of Szolnok] swore on his word of honour to deal the Hungarian captives 500 strikes each in return for every single trash” (1656); Valentinus Bujdosó [Kálmán Thaly], “Szólónoki rabság levele, Koháry Istvánhoz [The Letter of Captives in Szolnok to István Koháry],” *Századok* 5 (1871) 215; “When we were severely beaten or we were poorly supplied with provisions, we wrote a letter to Ónod, and the Hungarians started to treat the Turkish captives in the same way”; *Magyar Simplicissimus* [Hungarian *Simplicissimus*]. (Aurora, 4.) Ed. by József Turóczi-Trostler. Budapest, 1956, 191. Cf. also the letter of the prisoners in the

liberation of the Christian captives of Buda was hindered for quite a long time.

Even prisoners who failed to escape could win their freedom without paying ransoms in a number of other ways. For instance, they could accept the faith of their warders, that is they could become Christians or Muslims.⁵⁷ (However, such conversion was more often the result of “persuasion”.)⁵⁸ In such cases, prisoners became subjects of the Ottoman sultan or of the Hungarian king, and they also became the servants of their owners. At the same time, under the 1609 decrees of Egerszeg no one was to be persuaded “through the making of fair promises or by force”.⁵⁹ A captive could also be freed in the course of an exchange of prisoners of equal value. Such actions took place on the basis of mutual agreements between the two states or the frontier authorities, as well as during important legations. The agreements provided for the exchange of prisoners of equal ransom value and they also covered the time and place of the exchange. Cross-border exchanges were most likely to occur on the signing of a peace treaty or following the visit of an important envoy.⁶⁰

Stump Tower to the gaolers of Némétújvár: MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1314, Missiles No. 9307 (undated).

⁵⁷In 1596 Şaban alias Benedek and Ahmed alias Jancsi, after almost ten years' imprisonment converted to the Christian faith, which – as they stated – “we wish to keep until our deaths and to die in the Christian faith”. At the same time, in a letter to the Hungarian Chamber, they begged for at least a small donation in their support, whereupon one florin was paid out to them. Gábor Mátray, “Magyar rabok megváltási módja török fogságból a XVI. században [The Practice of Redemption of Hungarian Captives from Ottoman Captivity in the Sixteenth Century],” *Divatcsarnok* 2:9 (15.02.1854) 210: No. IV. After 1686 some of the Turks who were still in Buda – like their compatriots in Eger – avoided eternal slavery in the same manner. In the 1690s, many of the (mainly female) Ottoman prisoners that had been purchased by the citizens of Sopron, converted to Christianity. Lajos Némethy, “Az 1686. évi visszafoglalás után Budán maradt törökök [The Turks Remaining in Buda after the Reoccupation in 1686],” *Századok* 11 (1877) 141–148 and Kovács, “Török rabszolgák Sopronban,” 8. Cf. the excellent data concerning the baptism of Turkish children in the (still intact) Fiume registry of births: Klen, “Pokršťavanje »turske« djece”.

⁵⁸We know of one such experience of a Greek merchant from the 1660s: Dongó, “Magyar rabok,” (1915), 263–266: No. XLIX.

⁵⁹MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok No. 9.

⁶⁰In late 1628 the Aulic War Council, after receiving word that the pasha of Buda was willing to exchange 6 Christian prisoners, ordered István Pálffy, captain-general of the mining district, to ensure – in return for a ransom to be paid by the Hungarian Chamber –

Finally, a Christian captive could also gain his freedom by agreeing to obtain the “withdrawal” of a Turkish prisoner in return for his ransom – “a head for a head”.⁶¹ This, however, brings us to the most essential element of the keeping of captives, namely the determining and obtaining of the ransom.

The ransom (German: *Schätzung*, *Ranzion*, Hungarian: *sarc*, Turkish: *baha*, *fidye*) was offered by the captives themselves to their masters. If an owner was not satisfied with the amount – as was often the case – a process of bargaining would begin. The owner would attempt to push the price of ransom as high as possible, and would state his demands.⁶² Before the ransom amount was fixed, the owner would try to ascertain, with the help of his spies, just how large a sum the relatives of the prisoner were able to pay.⁶³ If a captive was unwilling to pledge the amount demanded, various appliances could be employed to persuade him to change his mind, including the strappado (Latin: *trochlea*, *funis oblungus vulgo strappado*, Hungarian: *csiga*), the stocks (Latin: *cypus*, *catasta*, German: *Geige*, *Fiedel*, Hungarian: *kaloda*)⁶⁴ or the so-called

the release of six Ottoman prisoners of similar ransom value. Although Pálffy fulfilled the Council’s request, the Chamber was slow to transfer the amount promised. Pál Jedlicska, *Eredeti részletek gróf Pálffy-család okmánytárához 1401–1653 s gróf Pálffyak életrajzi vázlatai* [Supplementary Details to the Historical Documents on the Count Family Pálffy 1401–1653 and Biographical Sketches of the Count Pálffys]. Budapest, 1910, 62–63: Nos. 111, 113, 71: No. 127. In 1570, on the nomination of Karl Rhym as the Habsburg ambassador to the Porte, two Ottoman prisoners in Komárom were exchanged for two gun-boatmen held captive in the Stump Tower. Takáts, *Komáromi daliák*, 42. Cf. also 1666: [Paulus Tafferner], *Caesarea legatio, quam Mandante Augustissimo Rom[anorum] Imperatore Leopoldo I. Ad Portam Ottoma[n]nicam suscepit, perfecitq[ue] excellentissimvs dominvs, dominvs Walterus S. R. I. Comes de Leslie*. Viennae, 1668, 171–172 and ÖStA KA Alte Feldakten 1665/13/2, as well as *Ibid.*, 1666/12/1, passim; 1668–1674: *Auer János naplója*, 20–36 and the many Ottoman data from the seventeenth century concerning requests for the release of captives at the time of the peace treaties: Fekete, *Türkische Schriften*, passim.

⁶¹In 1650, İbrahim of Fehérvár “who wished to liberate a head for a head, undertook the lowering of Máté Beszprémi Balog’s ransom, and besides he promised us 1,200 cubes of rock-salt”: MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok No. 49. p. 16.

⁶²*Ibid.*, Nos. 107, 110, 131, 144, 152, 154 and 188.

⁶³Varga, “Rabtartás és rabkereskedelem,” 126–127.

⁶⁴For a description of the *strappado*, see: *Kivégzés, tortúra és megszégyenítés a régi Magyarországon (Kiállítási katalógus)* [Execution, Torture, and Shaming in Old Hungary (Exhibition-Catalogue)]. Ed. by Attila Pandula and Péter Havassy. Eger, 1989, 19. For

“young wife”.⁶⁵ Of course, for their part, the captives would try to reduce the amount to be paid. They would often request their pashas or captain-generals to intervene on their behalf, who would then write something similar to the following: “although he was the *sancakbeyi* of His Majesty the Emperor, but he received the office not for gold or treasure, but for his service to the faith. Believe me, he was so poor that (when he was taken prisoner) the mighty Emperor’s treasurer seized all his fortune for the Emperor and sold it.”⁶⁶ Those captives who refused to put up the ransom fee despite torture remained “unransomed” and were sentenced to perpetual captivity. Only the above mentioned *pribeks* could expect a fate worse than this. According to the customary law of the border fortresses, they could not buy their freedom for money: for their kidnapping activity they were sentenced to death preceded by torture.

A contract was issued to both the captive and his keeper concerning the agreed ransom fee.⁶⁷ Such a decree would establish the composition of the ransom and the method and timing of payment. Ransoms usually comprised amounts of cash as well as horses, oxen, and a wide range of other goods (including banned weapons, carpets, coffee, etc).⁶⁸ In 1660 the Ottoman side urged the introduction of a rule whereby weapons and other goods would not be requested for the captives, but that they would be exchanged for cash or for other prisoners in the following way: “a lord for a lord, a leader for a leader, a *sipahi* for a nobleman, a *beşli* for a cavalryman, a *haiduck* for a Turkish foot-soldier.”⁶⁹ But none of this was

the stocks, see: Sándor Takáts, “Adatok nyelvünk történetéhez. Kaloda [Data on the History of the Hungarian Language: Stock],” *Magyar Nyelv* 2 (1906) 271. Takáts, “Magyar rabok, magyar bilincsek,” 535–540. Károly Vajna, *Hazai régi büntetések* [Hungarian Old Punishments]. II. Budapest, 1907, 99–112 and Ferenc Temesváry, *Büntető eszközök a régi Magyarországon* [Criminal Vehicles in Old Hungary]. (A Jánosházai Múzeum Közleményei, 1.) Szombathely, 1970, 29–32.

⁶⁵The “young wife” in the Stump Tower in Buda: MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1314, Missiles No. 9307 (undated). Cf. Dongó, “Magyar rabok,” (1914), 62: No. XXVIII.

⁶⁶The letter of Ferhad, pasha of Buda, to Miklós Pálffy, dated June 6, 1589: Jedlicska, “XVI. századi török–magyar levelek,” 694–696: No. IX; cf. also *Ibid.*, 691–692: No. III.

⁶⁷Ágoston Szalay, *Négyszáz magyar levél a XVI. századból. 1504–1560* [400 Hungarian Letters from the Sixteenth Century. 1504–1560]. (Magyar Leveles Tár, 1.) Pest, 1861, 282: No. CCXCIV (1558).

⁶⁸MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok No. 43. Cf. Szily, *op. cit.*, 88–89.

⁶⁹MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1314, Missiles No. 9299.

ever realised. Indeed, in western Transdanubia, in addition to many other goods, rock-salt was demanded from the Turkish captives. It seems from the amount of salt acquired in this way (many thousands of cubes annually)⁷⁰ that the Batthyánys were able to fulfil the needs of their estates in this western area of the country where Transylvanian salt was so hard to obtain. Meanwhile the Turks bargained with their Transylvanian captives and obtained many hundreds or even thousands of salt cubes.⁷¹

Difficulties concerning the collection of the ransom

Once both Hungarians and Ottomans had recognised that it was the captives themselves who were most capable of collecting their ransoms (or at least the outstanding amounts), they elaborated various schemes for this to happen, while ensuring their return through a system of suretyship. Generally, a captive would only be released after his relatives had sent a certain part of the ransom to the owner. In Buda “it was the custom that if half the ransom had been paid, the captive would be released.”⁷²

The smallest guarantee that could be made on the release of a captive was a “charter” (German: *Glaubensbrief*, Hungarian: *hitlevél*) in which a Hungarian nobleman or border fortress captain, or indeed a high-ranking Ottoman official, vouched for the return of the captive and pledged payment of a certain sum or of the ransom fee itself. On receipt of the charter, the keeper of the captive fixed the date (*terminus*) by which the outstanding amount of the ransom fee had to be paid. In a few cases the term indicated would be just one or two weeks, but more often it would extend over several months, and sometimes (although rarely) over a period of years.⁷³ If payment was not made by the given date, the captive

⁷⁰A special record was made of the use of rock-salt obtained from the captives: MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok Nos. 141, 303–304, 306, etc (1646–1652).

⁷¹Dongó, “Magyar rabok,” (1915), 146–147: No. XLVI.

⁷²MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1314, Missiles No. 9282. Cf. also Ferenc Szakály’s study in the present volume.

⁷³In 1683, lady Zsuzsanna and her daughter Katus, who had been taken from Kislehotka (Nyitra county) and imprisoned in Buda, were given 8 years by Ahmed pasha of Buda in which to collect their ransom of 220 Hungarian florins. Pál Horánszky, “Ahmed

was to be returned to his prison cell. However, since often the full amount of the ransom could not be collected in time, it became general practice for captives to request extensions to their terms.⁷⁴ Although such extensions depended on the good will of the keepers, they were usually granted. Thus, captives generally paid off their often considerable ransoms in small instalments. Releases made on the basis of such charters were not universally popular. Indeed, they were even banned after representatives of the Christian side attempted to mislead the Ottoman gaolers with fake charters.⁷⁵ But the *beys* of the border fortresses also often broke their pledges and would even threaten the royal border fortress soldiers with the capture of their major prisoners. Acting out of revenge, in 1611 the Hungarian chronicle writer Gergely Pethő threatened Mustafa *ağa* of Szigetvár in the following manner: “I tore up your letter of safe conduct on a pig-tail in front of many Christian and Muslim warriors, let these noble people see your humanity.”⁷⁶

For the money-hungry owners of captives, a more satisfactory solution was offered by the “system of pledge”, as it was called. This meant that wealthy relatives of a captive would generally send a number of servants to be held in prison for the duration of the temporary release of the captive. There were also exemplary cases of self-sacrifice in which family members or fellow soldiers were ready to accept the miserable prison life – sometimes for months – while the captive tried to collect his ransom. This practice, however, also proved unpopular, for it could be abused. Very often the person or persons held in lieu of the captive would not be set free on payment of the ransom. Instead, they would be kept as a security for another captive who was on release. And although – as Ahmed, the *alaybeyi* of Kanizsa expressed so clearly in 1641 – “there was no law in either Turkey or Hungary allowing for someone to be held as a guarantee for the ransom of another person,”⁷⁷ the captains and *beys* often sought to insure themselves by employing this illegal method.

az utolsó budai basa magyar levele [Hungarian Letter of Ahmed, the Last Pasha of Buda]”, *Magyar Családtörténeti Szemle* 3 (1937) 191.

⁷⁴MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1314, Missiles No. 9294 (1657).

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, No. 15.615.

⁷⁶MOL Festetics család keszthelyi levéltára [Archives of the Festetics family in Keszthely], Gersei Pethő cs. lvt. [Archives of the Pethő family] P 235, Antiqua miscellanea No. 950.

⁷⁷MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok No. 75/d.

The most easiest, safest, most effective and consequently most popular means of obtaining the release of captives was the institution of surety or bail (German: *Bürgschaft*, Latin: *sponsio*, Hungarian: *kezesség*, Turkish: *kefalet*). The system in question was widely employed in the jurisdiction of the border fortresses⁷⁸ and thus rapidly became one of the most interesting elements of Ottoman–Hungarian customary law in the frontier zone. However, while Christian soldiers acting as bailsmen for fellows facing military court cases would deposit sums of money or goods, in the case of the captives the role of bailsmen was very different. The guarantors (German: *Bürge*, Latin: *sponsor*, *fideiussor*, *obses*, Hungarian: *kezes*, Turkish: *kefil*) themselves were a very diverse group. According to the regulations, nobody could be forced into becoming a bailsmen. However, in reality, the practice was just the opposite.⁷⁹

Very often – as has been demonstrated in the examples above – fellow prisoners of a released captive would be forced into becoming his guarantors. The number of bailsmen ranged from several to as many as fifty. And in some cases the whole prisoner population of the Stump Tower in Buda was forced into standing surety.⁸⁰ In letters of bail (German: *Bürgschaftsbriefe*, Latin: *litterae fideiussionales*, Hungarian: *kezeslevél*, Turkish: *kefaletname*), which contained details of the ransoms due from the released prisoners and indicated the timing of payment, bailsmen undertook to pay the agreed ransom fees if the released prisoners failed to return. In other instances, under the terms of bail, guarantors could expect to pay further sums of money or double the original ransom fees, or even to lose parts of their bodies (eyes, noses, ears, fingers or teeth) and be subjected to thrashings.⁸¹ Sometimes gaolers had no qualms about carrying out these draconian punishments and amputations.⁸² The prisoners

⁷⁸Pálffy, *op. cit.*, 154–155.

⁷⁹See the 1647 letter of the captives of Buda: MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1314, Missiles No. 7761 and MOL Zichy cs. lvt. P 707, Missiles No. 2102. Published in *Monumenta Hungariae Judaica*. XII. 1414–1748. Ed. by Sándor Schreiber. Budapest, 1969, 75–76: No. 11/3 (1577).

⁸⁰MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1314, Missiles No. 9295 (1657).

⁸¹For individual examples of the above cases, see: MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok No. 4. fol. 94, Nos. 105, 139 and 148.

⁸²MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1314, Missiles No. 9307. Cf. also with the vivid description offered by *Hungarian Simplicissimus* of the forcing of the ransom payment (*Magyar Simplicissimus*, 190–191): “We were laid down, our feet were put in the stocks, one on the other; and they started to beat slowly but without mercy our soles, and generally de-

often attempted to forestall such punishments by offering up further amounts of money or other parts of the body in order to extend the deadline by which the released captive was to return. However, in 1634, further bail terms did not help the prisoners of Kanizsa, for the released prisoner “begging for his ransom in the towns and villages, spent the money on drink.”⁸³ Where a prisoner acting as bailsman denied or failed to recognise his responsibilities, he and the released captive were brought together in one of the border fortresses and forced to give evidence before a group of compatriots.⁸⁴

The best bailsmen were not other destitute prisoners but the wealthier market towns and settlements of the occupied territories or border zone. The Ottomans were quick to make use of the opportunities at hand. For instance, in 1584, ignoring the consequences for commercial trade, the Ottomans forced six *oppida* (Ráckeve, Nagymaros, Vác, Nagykőrös, Cegléd, and Tolna) in the occupied areas to be guarantors of the ransom fee of Ali, *bey* of Koppány which amounted to more than 30,000 golden florins. A quarter of a century earlier, three border settlements (Szikszó, Debrecen, and Rimaszombat) undertook a guarantee for the payment of Gáspár Mágochy’s ransom of 14,000 florins.⁸⁵ In the Dalmatian territories we know of cases from as early as the fifteenth century in which the citizens of Ragusa stood bail.⁸⁶ These customs remained in place in the Kanizsa border zone area even as late as the seventeenth century. At the request of their captives, the Ottomans would often call judges from villages in the vicinity of Kanizsa, in the counties Zala and Vas, and require them (on behalf of their villages) to undertake payment of bail for Hungarian captives.⁸⁷ Indeed, we know of one case in which a person

manded with ever increasing beating the ransom... they cut a cross into my soles, pressed out the blood and put diluted horse-dung on them to make it drain the pus.”

⁸³MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1314, Missiles No. 23.882.

⁸⁴Béla Vay, “Menheth bég levele Ibrányi Lászlóhoz [The Letter of Mehmed Bey to László Ibrányi]”, *Magyar Családtörténeti Szemle* 2:5 (1936) 14.

⁸⁵See Ferenc Szakály’s study in the present volume.

⁸⁶Vilfan, *op. cit.*, 183.

⁸⁷MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1314, Missiles No. 16.401 and MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok Nos. 75/d–75/e.

who turned to the Ottomans in another matter was forcibly retained as a bailman, even though he was unrelated to the captive.⁸⁸

Captives sent out to collect their ransoms initially had to wear heavy iron chains around each foot. Released captives were therefore called “iron captives” (in Latin: *captivus ferreus*, in Hungarian: *vasas rab*).⁸⁹ Later, after they had paid off the larger part of their ransom, they wore a chain on just one of their legs. The chains were not worn by more important slaves whose former superiors or lords paid off the so-called chain ransoms in advance. However, at the request of the captives, even wealthier relatives often refrained from paying this sum. There were two main reasons for this. First, people were more likely to be merciful to those who begged in chains and were less likely to think that the beggar was a fake. Second, the iron captives had various special rights. Since their movement was impaired by the chains, on both sides of the border they were commonly transported from one village to another in a carriage provided by local inhabitants until they reached the imaginary frontier of the two states. Thus, the captives of the Stump Tower could travel westwards from Buda towards Tata as far as Bicske.⁹⁰ Local inhabitants were also expected to provide for the released captives’ board and lodging. Proof that this practice soon became an established custom is offered by the many passes issued to the captives (German: *Paßbrief*, Latin: *passus*, *salvus conductus*, Hungarian: *menlevél*, *útlevél*) in which village magistrates were warned that everywhere they should offer a carriage to “the ransomed captives on their journeys” or the “beggar women captives” and provide for their food and beverage.⁹¹

⁸⁸Jenő Förster, “Egy korompai fiu török rabságban [A Boy of Korompa in Ottoman Captivity],” *Közlemények Szepes vármegye múltjából* 10 (1918) 153–154.

⁸⁹“They took the shackles from one of my feet, leaving on the other. The other end of it was fastened to my belt, and so I had to set out with two other Christians to Ónod with a Turkish safe conduct.” *Magyar Simplicissimus*, 193.

⁹⁰MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1314, Missiles No. 9293.

⁹¹Varga, “Rabtartás és rabkereskedelem,” 133: note 4. MOL MKA Rákóczi cs. lvt. [Archives of the Rákóczi family] E 190, Hadügy, Mai 23, 1668, Munkács: Ferenc I. Rákóczi’s letter of safe conduct for the prisoner György Kerczeghy; MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok No. 215 (1649), No. 351 (1643), No. 392 (1657), No. 396 (1658); Letters of Ali, *ağa* of the cavalryman of Párkány for Miklós Kossuth from 1651 and Ferdinand III’s “passport” (also given to him) from 1652: Kálmán Thaly, “Kossuth Lajos három vitéz őse és a család czímerlevele [Three Valiant Ancestors of Lajos Kossuth and the Coats-of-Arms of the Kossuth Family],” *Turul* 12 (1894) 156–157;

The iron captives were also often given so-called begging letters, which – to prevent the captives from using them later on – included the date by which the ransom had to be paid. The introduction of these begging letters became necessary following an increase in the number of false captives. Such tricksters would even place chains around their legs and take up position close to a church of a village or town. Iron captives were also protected by customary law, the unwritten rules of which forbade their being whipped or bound. The strength of this custom is demonstrated by a 1680 decree of the military court of Füleke that was issued in connection with a case brought by a Hungarian captive on release against the castellan of the fortress, an interesting case *per se*. The captive had been travelling on a coach along a dirt road when the castellan had attacked him without reason and beaten him. Thus he had violated the system of customs established between the Ottoman–Hungarian border fortresses, and therefore the captive was requesting that since “he had been freed from paying his ransom and bail because he had been beaten by the castellan ... according to the old custom, the latter should pay the ransom.” Even though the castellan denied that he had committed the violent deed, following evidence from witnesses called to the case, the military court ruled against him. However, as the captive’s body had not turned blue despite the beating, the court ruled that the castellan should pay just part of the ransom – an amount equal to half the so-called blood money, or 20 florins.⁹²

Another interesting case occurred in 1647. A Turkish captive released on bail from the dungeon of Kapuvár had gone to the house of his Hungarian owner, who had then bound him for a night. Subsequently, the captive had travelled to Buda and lodged a complaint with the pasha. In co-operation with the gaolers, the pasha proceeded to serve justice, much in the same way as the military court in Füleke had done. Thus, in the spirit of the customary law of the border zone, the pasha ruled that the status of the captive no longer applied and that the captive should be

see further the begging letter (in Hungarian on the one, and in Turkish on the other side of it) issued by Ahmed pasha of Buda for lady Zsuzsanna and her daughter, who had been taken from Kislehotka (Nyitra county) from 1683: Horánszky, “Ahmed az utolsó budai basa,” 191.

⁹²MOL Esterházy cs. lvt. P 125, Pál nádor No. 11.378. Cf. Pálffy, *op. cit.*, 142–143 and MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1314, Missiles No. 27.485.

released. In addition, the bailsmen were also freed of any obligation.⁹³ When issuing its ruling, the Ottoman court repeatedly requested the opinion of the Christian prisoners in the Stump Tower. The Hungarian prisoners stated that in their view the master of the captive did not respect the institution of bail, and that as a result the captive should be given his freedom.

In connection with captives released on bail, another unwritten rule reappears time and again in contemporary Ottoman–Hungarian correspondence. It often happened that shortly before his ransom was due to be paid, an iron captive would either fall victim to robbers or die in an epidemic. In such cases the bailsmen or the party requesting the release of the captive had to prove that the captive in question really had died, and that the ransom fee was no longer payable. Thus, if a captive died before his ransom was due, his body “according to the old custom of the border zone” had to be sent to his keepers, who would then receive no further payment.⁹⁴ If, on the other hand, he died after this date, his bailsmen were required to pay off his ransom. The sending of the corpse was important proof of the death of the captive for both parties and prevented unfortunate happenings like the following one in Sopron in 1699. Here, a citizen of the town was about to marry the widow of a former inhabitant who had “died” in a Turkish prison, when the latter suddenly gave word that he was still alive.⁹⁵

In the middle of the seventeenth century, the unruly behaviour of an increasing number of soldiers rendered conditions along the border rather chaotic. The captives also played their part in this. Not only was there a rapid increase in the number of “fake” beggars on Ottoman territories,⁹⁶ but even the “true captives” began to abuse such prerogatives as the right of the “iron captives” to transportation by carriage or the right to food provisions. In their desire to collect the ransom fee as rapidly as possible, prisoners on release would sometimes form into groups of bandits and

⁹³*Ibid.*, No. 7762.

⁹⁴Jedlicska, “XVI. századi török–magyar levelek,” 705: No. XXIX (1594). MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok No. 4. fol. 94 (1601) and *Ibid.*, No. 158 (1647).

⁹⁵Kovács, *op. cit.*, 9: note 2.

⁹⁶Sometimes the “true” captives themselves requested to be commissioned by one of the counties to catch and present false captives. Dongó, “Magyar rabok,” (1914), 332: No. XL.

force wealthier settlements in the occupied territories to hand over a carriage or provide for their ransom fees. They would also lease market duties and, as commissioners, would extract money from traders, and pilfer and sell the must of serfs during the vintage, etc. By the 1650s such abuses had become so common that both the Turkish and Hungarian authorities began to stipulate that only iron captives receive transport and provisions. Indeed, both sides ordered the pursuit and capture of the bandits. In 1654, Heves county even passed a decree stipulating on which roads released captives might travel from Eger to Fülek.⁹⁷

To prevent such violations and to speed up the collection of ransoms, in the middle of the seventeenth century the captives began to be set free in a different way. Released captives were accompanied by one or two fellow prisoners. Such men were referred to as “postmen” (in Hungarian *posták*), and their task was to assist captives in collecting their ransoms and to check up on them.⁹⁸ They were called “postmen” (hereinafter I will refer to them as “messenger”) because they were the ones who kept in contact with the bailsmen and the keepers; they forwarded the ransom instalments and delivered any letters written in connection with this. Beggar captives, freed of having to take their instalments to their remote keepers, could thus concentrate their energies on collecting the ransoms.⁹⁹

In the case of the messengers, too, bailsmen were found among the remaining fellow prisoners. Their debts increased even further if the re-

⁹⁷Numerous examples from Gyöngyös in the middle and second half of the century are mentioned in Lajos Fekete, “Gyöngyös város levéltárának török iratai [The Ottoman Documents of the Archives of the Town Gyöngyös],” *Levéltári Közlemények* 10 (1932) 289, 316: No. 72 and *Ibid.*, 11 (1933) 93–140, passim. From Jászberény: Klára Hegyi, “Jászberény török oklevelei [The Ottoman Documents of the Town Jászberény],” *Szolnok megyei levéltári füzetek* 11 (1988) 5–177, passim and János Botka, “Latin és magyar nyelvű források a Jászság XVI–XVII. századi történetéhez [Latin and Hungarian Sources on the History of Jászság in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century],” *Szolnok megyei levéltári füzetek* 11 (1988) 179–358, passim.

⁹⁸MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok No. 148 (1647).

⁹⁹In the sixteenth century, the ransoms of captives on release were often brought in by Ottoman or Hungarian border fortress soldiers. This practice, however, did not become firmly rooted because in such cases the opposing side had to issue letters of safe conduct for the soldiers, so that they could travel unhindered in the enemy zone. Jedlicska, “XVI. századi török–magyar levelek,” 698: No. XIV (1589). In the second half of the seventeenth century, on the other hand, it was not unknown for Ottoman captives to force the inhabitants of Gyöngyös to collect their ransoms. Fekete, “Gyöngyös város,” (1933) 108: No. 134.

leased captives and their messengers made their escape. If this happened and the gaolers could be persuaded, further messengers were sent out (again on bail) to determine the escapees' whereabouts. If the prisoners agreed to being thrashed, they could even beg for a messenger who returned with less than the amount of his instalment to be allowed out once again.¹⁰⁰ If a messenger died before payment of the ransom was due, the other messenger was obliged to bring in his body. If the body was not brought in, or if the messenger died after the payment date, prisoners who were serving as bailsmen had to pay his ransom, too.¹⁰¹ We even know of one case from the 1660s in which an owner of a messenger attempted to collect his ransom fee from the bailsmen, even though the messenger in question had died before the deadline. The Turks in the council (*divan*) rejected the owner's arguments, whereupon he turned to the *kadı* who had just arrived from the distant interior of the Empire and who gave a sentence in his favour. However, both owner and *kadı* had finally to accept the binding nature of established customary law. Captain-general Ferenc Csáky's military court in Upper Hungary stated clearly that they should refrain from making "their unusual request, since it is a breach of the ancient law of the marches, if the body has been brought in before the deadline."¹⁰²

Finally, where a captive did pay off the remaining amount of the ransom as well as the prison and chain fees to his owner, on his final release he received a letter of discharge confirming that all payments had been made. At such time, his begging letter, the letter of safe conduct, and the letters of bail of his fellow prisoners were destroyed by his keepers. At the same time, he was required to state solemnly that he would not take part in any offensive actions for one whole year.¹⁰³ Having returned home, many former captives continued to serve in the

¹⁰⁰In 1657 the Christian captives in Buda submitted themselves to 1,000 thrashes in order that a messenger would be released once again. MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1314, Missiles No. 26.646.

¹⁰¹An unusual example from circa 1650: "He died when he was a messenger in Turkey. His corpse was brought out by the older Ali from Vál"; MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok Nos. 49, 65, 94 and 242.

¹⁰²MOL Csáky cs. lvt. P 71, Fasc. 264. Tétel 5. Sedes bellica. October 19, 1665, Kassa.

¹⁰³*Magyar Simplicissimus*, 199.

border fortresses; they also set about paying off their debts incurred through the collection of the ransom fee.

Various methods were used by captives released on bail (or their relatives) to collect the ransom fee. Wealthier nobles would sell off their belongings and then request loans from relatives. Finally, if all else had failed, they would sell off or mortgage their properties.¹⁰⁴ The common soldiers of the border fortresses, on the other hand, sometimes had no choice but to set off on long journeys as beggars. They travelled from the Transylvanian border to Laibach in Carniola. Indeed, sometimes they could even be found wandering across territories belonging to the Holy Roman Empire.¹⁰⁵ Meanwhile, they would request the Hungarian Chamber in Pozsony or the Aulic War Council to continue paying their salaries for the duration of their imprisonment (or release on bail) in view of their great poverty.¹⁰⁶ Often the begging serfs or the poor common soldiers of the border fortresses would turn to neighbouring counties and request “charitable subsidy” (*subsidium charitativum*).¹⁰⁷ Sometimes they would simply request the magistrates of a town to permit them to beg a part of

¹⁰⁴Samu Borovszky, *Borsod vármegye története a legrégebb időktől a jelenkorig* [History of Borsod County from the Oldest Times to the Modern Age]. I. Budapest, 1909, 294–295.

¹⁰⁵The travels of the captives from Hungary in the Holy Roman Empire are borne witness to by the dozens of passes and patents issued to them by the Chancellery of the Imperial Court Council in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. ÖStA HHStA Reichshofkanzlei Paßbriefe Karton 1–18: passim and *Ibid.*, Patentes und Steckbriefe, Karton 1–4: passim. For begging of captives from Upper Hungary in Laibach, see Vilfan, *op. cit.*, 189–190.

¹⁰⁶Petitions of border-fortress soldiers from Győr, Eger, and Komárom from 1570: Mátray, *op. cit.*, 209–210: Nos. I–II. In the mid-seventeenth century, border fortress captain-general Ádám Batthyány intervened at the Aulic War Council in the matter of the salary petition of Gergely Soós and György Felső, commanders of the small border-castle Kányavár in Zala county. MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok No. 32.

¹⁰⁷Thaly Kálmán, “Kossuth Lajos,” 153–154 and Szerémi [Arthur Odeschalchi], “Emlékek Barsvármegye hajdanából. (1439–1711.) [Documents on the History of Bars County (1439–1711)], Part V,” *Történelmi Tár* (1892) 539–540: No. CL. Similar begging letters from the seventeenth century to Bars county: *Ibid.*, 538–542: Nos. CXLVIII–CLIII; to Abaúj county: Dongó, “Magyar rabok,” (1910–1916) passim, and to Borsod county: Borovszky, *op. cit.*, 295–296.

their ransom in front of the local church.¹⁰⁸ Indeed, in 1683 even one member of the affluent Kisfaludy family, a man called László, who subsequently became vice-general of the border fortress district around Győr, had no choice but to accept the charity of the Hungarian boot-makers' guild in order that he might win back his liberty.¹⁰⁹

The counties and the treasury generally gave one or two florins to captives who turned to them with letters beseeching their mercy. In 1570, on hearing of the increasing numbers of such petitions, King Rudolf even permitted the Hungarian Chamber to set aside an annual sum of 300 Hungarian florins for the support of the captives.¹¹⁰ Meanwhile, private individuals, officers and soldiers also demonstrated their humanity in the form of charitable actions. They knew very well that they too might one day share the miserable fate of the poor captives.¹¹¹ In 1649 the garrison troops in Kiskomárom (near Lake Balaton) donated one whole month's salary in order to assist the fortress's vice-captain, who was held captive in Kanizsa.¹¹² Indeed, in the late seventeenth century the humanist Kristóf Lackner (mayor of Sopron) provided in his will for the establishment of a special foundation to support fellow citizens imprisoned by the eternal enemy of Christendom (*Erbfeind des Christlichen Glaubens*). Lackner's foundation was able to offer great sums in support of the prisoners. Often sums of 50–100 florins were transferred, as against the very modest subsidies of the counties and the Hungarian Chamber, which normally consisted of just a few florins.¹¹³ At the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the city of Laibach rendered similar financial

¹⁰⁸The captives at Eger wrote in 1663 to the chief justice of Kassa: "Please kindly consider permitting the two messengers presenting this letter [to beg] in front of the church, so that Christians may grant them godly alms." Lajos Kemény ifj., "Kassa város levéltárából [From the Archives of the Town Kassa]," *Történelmi Tár* (1897) 573–574. Cf. also the German-language petition of two Croatian soldiers to the town of Laibach (1596): Vilfan, *op. cit.*, 185, as well as the petition of pastor Balázs Maráczai Nagy to the town of Sopron: Deák, "Okiratok," 110–111: No. I.

¹⁰⁹Alfréd Lengyel – Elemér Lovas, "Kisfaludy László, győri alkapitány levelezése [Correspondence of László Kisfaludy Vice-general of Győr]," *Győri Szemle* 10:2 (1939) 90: No. 18.

¹¹⁰Mátray, *op. cit.*, 209: No. I.

¹¹¹Dongó, "Magyar rabok," (1914), 169: No. XXXII.

¹¹²Varga, "Rabtartás és rabkereskedelem," 130. Cf. some similar examples in Takáts, "Magyar rabok, magyar bilincsek," 522.

¹¹³Kovács, *op. cit.*, 6–11.

assistance to its imprisoned inhabitants and also permitted captives released on bail to beg in the city.¹¹⁴ In the seventeenth century, a number of redemption societies were established in territories belonging to the Holy Roman Empire. Finally, during the wars of re-conquest against the Ottomans (1683–1699), an active role in the redemption of captives in Hungary was also played by a holy order that had been established with the aim of liberating the Christian captives, the *Ordo Sanctissimae Trinitatis*.¹¹⁵

Apart from these unselfish acts of charity, there were also cases in which contracts were signed by lords with captive private or common soldiers (or with their relatives). Under the terms of such contracts, seigneurs would agree to pay the captives' ransoms, if the captives or their families pledged to enter into their service on release.¹¹⁶ Of course some seigneurs subsequently took advantage of this situation. Breaching the contracts, they forced the former captives into permanent and unending service.

The representation of interests in the prisons

From the second half of the sixteenth century, the customs relating to the ransom fees, primarily the institution of bail, and the awful conditions prevailing in most prisons required that prisoners take a common stand. This process of communal development was speeded up by an increase in the number of prisoners in the first half of the seventeenth century; an increase that is well demonstrated by prison population figures for the Stump Tower in Buda. Whereas prisoners in the Constantinople prison of the Seven Towers (*Yedikule*) came from various enemy states and thus

¹¹⁴Vilfan, *op. cit.*, 184–192.

¹¹⁵Ferenc Fallenbüchl, *A rabkiváltó trinitárius szerzetesek Magyarországon* [The Monks of the *Ordo Sanctissimae Trinitatis* in Hungary]. (A Szent István Akadémia Történelem-, Jog- és Társadalomtudományi Osztályának értekezései, II/9.) Budapest, 1940, 9–14, 32–41.

¹¹⁶For examples from the seventeenth century: Varga, “Rabtartás és rabkereskedelem,” 131 and Jedlicska, *Eredeti részletek*, 112: No. 209. Sometimes, however, the captives were willing to pledge themselves to service until death. Borovszky, *Borsod vármegye*, 296.

formed very distinct groups (Venetians, Germans, Hungarians, etc),¹¹⁷ captives in the prisons of Ottoman Hungary and the Kingdom of Hungary almost without exception shared the same nationality and religion. Such homogeneity facilitated the taking of a united stand; prisoners were more capable of expressing their concerns either to their keepers or to the pashas and captain-generals who were based just some miles away. The prisoner rebellions of the period – such as the aforementioned rebellion at the Batthyány castle in Szalónak in 1652 or the Várad rebellion 30 years later – proved to the owners of the captives that the best way of securing payment of the ransoms was to permit the formation of organisations representing the interests of prisoners. In addition, the disturbances of the seventeenth century served to accelerate the process by which smaller settlements and communities (including the prisoner communities) joined together to defend their own interests.

The spokesman of the prisoner community was the so-called “prison-steward” (Hungarian: *rabgazda*, German: *Wirt*). As the diary of Johann Ferdinand Auer from Pozsony states, in accordance with the custom of the border fortresses, the gaolers chose the steward from among the more senior captives.¹¹⁸ (In doing so, they probably acted with the consent of the prisoners.) These spokesmen were generally required to represent and defend the interests of the captives and to communicate with the Ottoman owners and gaolers, who did not always speak Hungarian. In the first half of the 1660s, for instance, the office of steward was held in Buda by István, a cavalryman from the fortress Érsekújvár who had been a captive for nine years. In Várad and in Eger it became customary for two stewards to be elected. At the Stump Tower in Buda, which was the largest prison in the occupied territories, a clerk was elected alongside the steward. The clerk was required to manage prisoner correspondence and to issue the various documents (petitions, letters of bail, pledges, etc). This post was held in the early 1650s by Péter Rácz and from 1656 until 1657 by Géci Sentei.¹¹⁹ Furthermore, according to a piece of evidence

¹¹⁷Auer János *naplója*, 191–196.

¹¹⁸*Ibid.*, 122: *Überall in denen Kranitzhäusern der Gebrauch, das einer unnter den Gefangenen von den Tömlitzer zum Haupt über die andern, so hernach der Wirth genennet wirdt, gemacht, welcher Sorg und Aufsicht vor die andern tragen muess.*

¹¹⁹For Rácz: MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1314, Missiles Nos. 15.615, 15.617, 20.020, 26.681 and 27.310. According to the captives’ register of 1654 he was a soldier from

from 1661, prisoners in the Stump Tower even had their own priest, a man called György Szolnai.¹²⁰ Thus, the prisoners' interests were represented in a manner that resembled the decision-making process of a village council.

The primary task of the prison steward was to communicate and maintain contact with the local Ottoman dignitaries (pashas, *beys*, and *kaimakams*, etc) and the prison keepers (*dizdars* and gaolers).¹²¹ They had to represent the interests of the captives in a diplomatic manner that was satisfactory to both parties. In the centres of the *vilayets* and *sancaks* it became customary for the pashas and *beys* to hold special councils (*divan*) in which they debated the captives' ransoms and other issues.¹²² Stewards and clerks (accompanied by other prisoners) were able to take part in these discussions, too. It was during the *divan* that the owners of captives received their ransoms and that captives were forced into becoming bailsmen. Moreover it was here that letters to the captives (and to the Ottomans concerning the captives) were read out and translated into Turkish by the prisoners' clerks or by the Hungarian scribes of the pashas and *beys*. The *divan* also provided an opportunity for the Ottoman officers in Buda, the *kadı* and the jurisconsult (*müfti*), to decide in matters relating to the ownership of captives and the payment of their ransoms.¹²³

Thus most tasks of the stewards were related in some way to the ransom fee. Apart from their role in the bargaining process, stewards also advised fellow captives in matters such as the choice of bailsmen and messengers. Similarly, it was the stewards who managed funds bequeathed to the prisoner community. Generally, such funds were used to purchase groceries. In the course of the seventeenth century, it became the accepted custom among the soldiers of the border fortresses and the

Egerszeg, whose ransom had been determined by the Ottomans at 900 *thalers*. *Ibid.*, Nos. 7763 and 27.310. For Sentei: *Ibid.*, Nos. 9278, 9289–9296 and 42.841.

¹²⁰It is hard to say whether we should consider the priest mentioned in the published document as caring for the captives' spiritual lives. Nagy, "A budai csonkatorony," 662.

¹²¹MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1314, Missiles No. 9299 (1660). Cf. András Kubinyi, "Rabok feliratai a budai Csonkatoronyban [The Inscriptions of Captives in the Stump Tower of Buda]," *Budapest régiségei: A Budapesti Történeti Múzeum évkönyve* 18 (1958) 523: note 16.

¹²²"His Greatness, the *bey* called us to him, since the Turks had *divans*, for the reason that they would [debate] the matter of the prisoners" (Szolnok, 1656); Thaly, "Szólnoki rabság," 215. Cf. Fekete, *Türkische Schriften*, 243: No. 9.

¹²³MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1314, Missiles Nos. 9278, 9284, 9289, 9294 and 9296.

nobles of the border districts to bequeath a sum of several florins to prisoners in the neighbouring Ottoman areas, especially to those imprisoned in the Stump Tower of Buda.¹²⁴ There were other benefactors, too (for example, the market towns of the Great Plain).¹²⁵ Their donations of cash and food provisions were usually handed over to the leaders of the prisoner community by the Buda magistrates. Meanwhile, those Christians who were still residing in Buda or Pest gave food to the captives in return for military tax exemptions. Indeed, when in 1596 Miklós Pálffy, captain-general of the mining border district, attempted to force citizens of the two towns to pay tax, it was the local prisoner community that rose to the defence of the local inhabitants. The prisoners confirmed that the townspeople had been providing them with food.¹²⁶

Nevertheless, ensuring the prisoners' food supply was no small task for the steward. While prisoners would sometimes be allowed to go and have meals at the houses of local burghers, the Christian inhabitants (who were decreasing in number) were unable to meet the needs of a rapidly expanding prisoner population. Since the prison ransom paid by the captives to their keepers only covered the expenses of their guards, the prisoners could not expect to be supplied with provisions, and thus many of them went hungry.¹²⁷ Their requests for assistance sometimes fell on deaf ears. The Ottomans therefore permitted captives released on bail to bring food (meat and bread bought/begged for in the Kingdom of Hungary) to their fellow prisoners. In the spirit of reciprocity, this practice was also permitted by the other side – although on a number of

¹²⁴József Horváth, *Győri végrendeletek a 17. századból*. I. 1600–1630. [Seventeenth-Century Testaments from Győr]. Győr, 1995, 30: No. 4 (1604); *ibid.*, II. 1631–1654. Győr, 1996, 168: No. 212 (1652) and MOL Daróczy cs. lvt. [Archives of the Daróczy family] P 961, Tétel 1: Paksy család iratai [Documents of the Paksy family] fols. 42–46 (1663).

¹²⁵Nagykőrös, 1630: Áron Szilády – Sándor Szilágyi, *Okmánytár a hódoltság történetéhez Magyarországon* [Archive on the History of Ottoman Rule in Hungary]. (Török–magyar-kori történelmi emlékek I: Okmánytár, I.) Pest, 1863, 18: No. XVIII and 1650: *ibid.*, 161: No. LXIX.

¹²⁶Pál Jedlicska, *Adatok erdődi báró Pálffy Miklós, a győri hősnak életrajza és korához 1552–1600* [Data on the Era and Biography of the Hero of Győr, Miklós Pálffy, Baron of Erdőd]. Eger, 1897, 593: No. 928/b.

¹²⁷The awful consequences of this practice are vividly and accurately described in the 1663 diary of Johann Ferdinand Auer, a citizen of Pozsony who was being held close to the Stump Tower; *Auer János naplója*, *passim*.

occasions it was forbidden after captives on release failed to return. Subsequently, the Ottomans would encourage the Hungarian captain-generals to follow their example and permit the transfer of goods once again.¹²⁸

Subject to the permission of the gaolers, stewards could also travel to areas in the Kingdom of Hungary in order to manage the affairs of their fellow prisoners. Such journeys appear to have been commonplace. This would explain the fact that both in Eger and in Várad, two stewards were elected by the prisoner community; if one steward was absent, the other could continue to manage the affairs of the prisoners. We know of several interesting visits made by stewards to the royal territories in the second half of the seventeenth century. In 1661, for example, András Posgay, the steward in Buda, acting on behalf of his fellow prisoners, sold a property in the district of Pórládony (Sopron county), which had come to be owned by the prisoners. The whole story was as follows: A prisoner on release was making his way back to Buda with a part of his ransom when he was murdered and robbed in the Bakony hills by a man from Tüskevár. The murderer was soon identified and caught by his lords. Subsequently, the fellow prisoners of the dead man offered up the murderer to the Ottomans in lieu of the deceased. The Ottomans, however, rejected the offer. Given that they had not received the body of the deceased captive, the Ottomans demanded the ransom sum of 2,000 *thalers* from his bailsmen in accordance with customary law. The court of the lord (*sedes dominalis*) subsequently sentenced the guilty man from Tüskevár to death and ordered that all his property and belongings be given to the captives. Thus, a house-session in the village of Tompaháza (Sopron county), together with the neighbouring wood and a strip of agricultural land, passed into the ownership of the prisoners. In the spring of 1661, this property was sold to István Bakodi and his wife in the presence of lieutenant János Niczky, András Posgay (the prisoners' steward), György Szolnai (the prisoners' priest), and a further prisoner.

¹²⁸See some examples from the seventeenth century: MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1314, Missiles Nos. 7763, 9279, 9293 and 26.681. Request for food to Ádám Batthyány from the Stump Tower: *Ibid.*, No. 9307. Similar request by the Ottoman prisoners of Szalónak (castle of Ádám Batthyány) for provisions for the Hungarian captives of Kanizsa: MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok Nos. 118, 123 and 133.

The sum received was then used by the captives to pay off at least part of the ransom of their murdered companion.¹²⁹

In the second half of the 1660s, the stewards of Eger and Várad, accompanied by several other older prisoners, travelled to the military court of Ferenc Csáky (captain-general of Upper Hungary) on several occasions.¹³⁰ As in the case of the Fülek military court case of 1680 cited above – in which an iron captive had sued the royal fortress castellan – in these latter instances the prisoner communities of Várad or of Eger took a number of personages from Royal Hungary to court. At the military courts it was primarily the stewards who defended the interests of the prisoners. For instance, in the autumn of 1665 the prisoners' steward in Várad, Mihály Dobai, commenced an action against a serf woman belonging to the landowner Mrs Zsigmond Homonnai Drugeth. The serf woman's son had been serving his time as a captive of the *ağa* in Várad. He had then been released with his messenger on bail. The boy had then returned to Terebes to visit his parents. As the boy's escape was made impossible by the messenger, he and his parents elaborated a most vile plan. One night "they suffocated the messenger, struck him on the head, and killed him". When, subsequently, the two captives failed to reappear, the gaolers took disciplinary action. The prisoners then decided to send some more messengers out to search for the boy and his messenger. They managed to find the boy and brought him back to the prison. His companion, however, they found to be dead and buried. Since all this happened when his term had already expired, according to customary law the guarantors were required to undertake to pay the ransom themselves. However, referring to the same customary law, they claimed that "it is the law among Ottomans and Hungarians that the ransom (of a murdered person) be paid where the murder has taken place."¹³¹ Through the intervention of captain-general Csáky and Palatine Ferenc Wesselényi, the prisoners demanded the messenger's ransom from the wife of Homonnai Drugeth, the owner of the supposed killers. But she was slow to pay up and therefore the prisoners requested that the murdering "old

¹²⁹Nagy, *op. cit.*, 661–663.

¹³⁰On the organisation of the military court (with examples), see Pálffy, *op. cit.*, 115–132.

¹³¹Izsépy, "Rablevelek," 316.

woman” be handed over to them. However, they first had to prove that she really was one of the perpetrators of the crime.¹³²

It was at the above military court, rather than the county civil court, that the captives of Várád brought a lawsuit against the nobleman Sándor Semsey of Abaúj county. The story ran as follows: Semsey sold a Turkish captive to János Fekete, a prisoner in Várád, who wished to hand over the Turkish captive in return for his own release. However, the Turks in Várád did not agree to this exchange. Semsey resold the Turk, even though by now he was the property of Fekete. The second purchaser was a Hungarian captive in Eger, who in possession of the Turk succeeded in negotiating his own release. Fekete then left Várád accompanied by a messenger with his fellow prisoners acting as bailsmen. However, instead of searching for Semsey, shortly after their release the two men took to their heels and fled. The gaolers then tortured the bailsmen and demanded the payment of the escaped prisoners’ ransoms. The bailsmen turned to Csáky’s military court, asking that Semsey return at least the sum received for the Turk from Fekete.¹³³ We know that similar things happened to Turkish captives, too. In 1640 bailsmen in the dungeons of the castle of Fülek demanded 900 *guruş* blood money from the town of Gyöngyös after the murder of their fellow captive who had been begging at the town’s market, but this time their attempt remained unsuccessful.¹³⁴

In addition to such cases at the Hungarian military courts, it would seem that the prisoner communities gave expert opinions on matters concerning their Ottoman fellow captives, and sometimes acted as a “court of justice” and passed judgements (not infrequently under the pressure of necessity). For example, when a captive on release failed to reappear, in order to ensure payment of the ransom a ruling was passed in common by the captain-general and the prisoners.¹³⁵ In 1652, the Christian captives of the Stump Tower determined the ransom issue of their fellow captive on release, Ferenc Palotai, in the same manner.¹³⁶

¹³²MOL Csáky cs. lvt. P 71, Fasc. 264. Tétel 5. Sedes bellica. October 19, 1665, Kassa. Cf. also Izsépy, *op. cit.*, 320–321.

¹³³*Ibid.*, 321–322.

¹³⁴Fekete, “Gyöngyös város,” (1932) 316: Nos. 70–71 and Idem, *op. cit.*, (1933) 113–114: Nos. 154–155.

¹³⁵Jedlicska, *Eredeti részletek*, 138–139: No. 259 (1635).

¹³⁶MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok No. 343.

Authentication of documents in the prisoner communities

The issuing of documents and petitions (letters of bail, pledges, etc) was a difficult task for the steward. In Buda and other Ottoman border fortresses it became customary in the early seventeenth century for the prisoners to employ a clerk. The clerk was required to compose the imploring letters of his fellows day after day and in a uniform style and structure.¹³⁷ Authentication of written documents was also necessary, because captives on release, who were delivering their letters in person,¹³⁸ often had to prove that they were on the right road. Owing to the general disorder in the country, the number of false captives carrying false documents soared. Official documents could easily be forged. Authentication of written documents in Hungary was usually performed with the aid of a seal (*sigillum*). The seventeenth century therefore became the golden age of Hungarian seals.¹³⁹ Before long the Hungarian prisoner communities of the occupied territories were also using seals. It would seem that the seals were guarded by the stewards, who used them to authenticate documents prepared by the clerks.

Since few of these documents have survived, we should use caution when interpreting the employment of seals by prisoners. Still, a comprehensive examination of these seals would doubtless produce some interesting results. Such a study is very much needed for the use of

¹³⁷Izsépy, *op. cit.*, 317–318.

¹³⁸MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1314, Missiles Nos. 9307 and 35.722.

¹³⁹For this process, see: József Lugossy, “Két magyar köriratú pecsét 1500. évből [Two Seals of 1500 with Hungarian Inscriptions],” *Magyar Történelmi Tár* 1 (1855) 172–192. Kálmán Thaly, “Régi magyar községi pecsétek [Old Hungarian Community-Seals],” *Századok* 3 (1869) 571–575. Gy[ula] N[agy], “Régi magyar községi pecséteink statisztikája [Statistics of the Old Hungarian Community-Seals],” *Századok* 5 (1871) 513–517 and Bernát L. Kumorovitz, “A magyar szfragisztika múltja [The History of Hungarian Sphragistics],” in *Emlékkönyv Szentpétery Imre születése hatvanadik évfordulójának ünnepére* [Festschrift for Imre Szentpétery to his 60th Birthday]. Budapest, 1938, 274–278. Among the various seals of the authorities, we know of one from 1680, that of the military judge of Fülek that had merely a Latin text (with mistakes): *SIGILLV[M] IVDICII BELLICIS* [sic!] *PRESIDII FILEKIENSIS*. MOL Esterházy cs. lvt. P 125, Pál nádor No. 11.378, and Pálffy, *op. cit.*, 144, and 228: note 2. Cf. also the interesting Peasant county seals: Ferenc Szakály, *Parasztvármegyék a XVII. és XVIII. században* [The Peasant Counties in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries]. (Értekezések a történeti tudományok köréből, Új sorozat, 49.) Budapest, 1969, 142–143.

Hungarian seals in the early modern period remains largely unexplored.¹⁴⁰ The data introduced below will hopefully demonstrate some of the possibilities.

The earliest “prisoner seal” dates from a letter written on February 15, 1651 by the prisoners of the Stump Tower in Buda to Ádám Batthyány (illustration No. 1).¹⁴¹ Although the seal is small and somewhat clumsy, the initials “CT” clearly demonstrate that the seal was used by the Christian captives of the *Csonka Torony* to authenticate their documents. Unfortunately we still do not know when the prisoners began to use this seal. We may state, however, that there are no traces of the seal on documents issued in 1562, 1575, or even in 1605.¹⁴² On one of the prisoner-letters dating from 1636, we find a round-shaped seal that is divided into eight equal pieces. In the following decades, the seal of an imprisoned nobleman or a Turkish official was commonly attached to documents.¹⁴³ Thus, we may infer that seals began to be used by Christian prisoners in the Stump Tower in the 1640s. (However, many documents were issued without seals even after this time.)

We came across another seal of the Buda captives stemming from the autumn of 1651 in the valuable missilis-collection of the archives of family Batthyány (illustration No. 2).¹⁴⁴ This seal was used until at least 1660. The seal is larger than the others. Above the “CT” inscription, we see a depiction of a foot cuff linked by three rings, which was one of the

¹⁴⁰Bernát L. Kumorovitz as early as in 1938 opposed the notion that “sphragistics should above all deal with the medieval material”; see Kumorovitz, “A magyar szfragisztika,” 278.

¹⁴¹MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1314, Missiles Nos. 50.743 and 35.790. Here I should like to express my thanks to Sándor Kákonyi for his drawings of the seals. (The seals of the captives appear in their original size and form in the attached illustrations.)

¹⁴²1562: The letter of György Csarkó, border fortress soldier from Komárom to King Ferdinand I (1526–1564): ÖStA HHStA Türkei I. (Turcica) Karton 16. Konv. 2. fol. 133; 1575: The letter of Benedek Vadlövő to Péter Melith, commander of Diósgyőr: MOL Zichy cs. lvt. P 707, Missiles No. 2102; Two letters from 1605, one by Ferenc Wathay, the other by István Komornyik, to Ferenc Batthyány: MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1314, Missiles No. 51.262 (Wathay’s letter has been published on several occasions, see for example *Wathay Ferenc énekes könyve*, II. 164–165) and *Ibid.*, No. 27.083.

¹⁴³1636: *Ibid.*, No. 9277; 1646: *Ibid.*, Nos. 9279–9280; 1649: *Ibid.*, No. 35.722, and without year: *Ibid.*, No. 9309.

¹⁴⁴September 4, 1651: *Ibid.*, No. 31.527.

most widely-used Ottoman shackles in the seventeenth century.¹⁴⁵ The monogram of the seal was usually pressed into red wax or sometimes on to a piece of paper. Beneath the monogram, we see a depiction of another form of shackle. To the left and right of this depiction, there are strange-looking instruments, which were perhaps used by the Ottomans to torture people (probably hand and tongue stretchers or a hangman's chair). In the 1650s, the captives were also using a smaller seal (illustration No. 3), in actual fact a reduced version of the larger one. The smaller seal very closely resembled the larger one. Even so, in addition to the obvious difference in size, there were a number of other minor differences, too. For example, on the smaller seal the letters "C" and "T" were bolder, while above these letters there was a depiction of a cuff held together by an iron rod rather than chain links. Since undated letters (from the 1650s) are the only surviving documents demonstrating the use of the smaller seal, we cannot exclude the possibility that the smaller seal preceded the larger one; we simply do not have the evidence. It seems certain, however, that the two seals were in use at the same time, for they both appear on letters issued by the clerk Péter Rác (mentioned above). More seals were needed for two main reasons. First, there was an increase in the number of documents issued (after a rapid increase in the number of prisoners from the middle of the 1650s). Second, the stewards, who guarded the seals, continued to issue letters of bail and other documents even when they were travelling in royal Hungary.

One letter of the scribe Rác dating from the early 1650s carries a most remarkable seal depicting the Stump Tower itself, on a so-called Renaissance shield and in stylised form (illustration No. 4).¹⁴⁶ Above the shield, we see the initials "BCT" (= *Budai Csonka Torony*) – a conclusive proof that the depicted building is really the Stump Tower. It stood at the intersection of the east-west and north-south defence lines of the castle (today the inner courtyard of the Royal Palace is located at this site). The tower was the most important prison in Ottoman Hungary. Tradition has it that its name reflects the fact that construction (begun during the reign of King Sigismund of Luxemburg [1387–1437]) was never finished and thus the "stump" of the building remained exposed to

¹⁴⁵Temesváry, *Büntető eszközök*, 54.

¹⁴⁶MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1314, Missiles No. 15.615.

all weathers.¹⁴⁷ Although captives were kept in the tower in the middle ages,¹⁴⁸ it was during the Ottoman occupation that it became a real prison. According to one source, by 1551 Ali pasha of Buda was already keeping a large number of Christian prisoners in the tower.¹⁴⁹ The building – the wooden beams of which fell on to prisoners at the time of the great gunpowder explosion of 1578 (killing many of them) – was surrounded by a guardhouse and the barrack-like houses of the gaolers, Janissaries, and other Ottoman residents.¹⁵⁰ The tower itself, as demonstrated by the seal, was a building of several floors. The cells varied in terms of both size and “comfort”. The worst fate awaited those captives who had been assigned to the lower and darker dungeons (for example, the so-called *Alsókula*, i.e. “Lower *kula*”) or to the “extremely cold torture cellars”. Another area

¹⁴⁷“Opposite stands the great building of Sigismund [of Luxemburg], king of Hungary, it gives an impression more for its size than for its beauty. Apart from a square tower, it has six other towers, [the square tower] is incredibly wide, and because it remained unfinished it is called the Stump Tower” (Description of Gaspar Ursinus Velius in 1527). Florio Banfi, “Buda és Pest erődtményei 1686-ban [The Fortifications of Buda and Pest in 1686],” *Tanulmányok Budapest Múltjából* 5 (1936) 105. “Unfinished and without a roof, the rain falls in, therefore it is called the Stump Tower, that is a half-built truncated tower” (Hans Dernschwam’s description from the middle of the sixteenth century). *Hans Dernschwam*, 121. Cf. the archaeological discovery of the tower: László Gerevich, “A Budai Vár feltárt maradványainak leírása [Description of the Unearthed Remains of the Castle of Buda],” in *Budapest műemlékei* I. [National Monuments of Budapest]. (Magyarország műemléki topográfiája, 4.) Budapest, 1955, 248–251. The inscriptions carved by captives kept in the tower were published by Kubinyi, “Rabok feliratai,” 519–522.

¹⁴⁸MOL DI. 24 005 and Kubinyi, *op. cit.*, 519–520.

¹⁴⁹The letter of Imre Thelekessy to Ehrenreich von Königsberg, November 8, 1551, Komárom: ÖStA KA Alte Feldakten 1551/11/14.

¹⁵⁰Endre Veress, “Musztafa budai basa álma, s a nagy löpor-robbanás [The Dream of Mustafa Pasha of Buda and the Great Gunpowder-Explosion],” *Történelmi Tár* (1896) 742. Cf. *Monumenta Hungariae Judaica*, X. 1150–1766. Ed. by Sándor Schreiber. Budapest, 1967, 98–99: No. 68: *Viel gefangne Christen seyn darinn von dem Fewer verdorb*. See further Szakály, *Mezőváros és reformáció*, 277: note 283: *Turris quoque, quem Chongga seu curtam et intectam vocant, in quo passe captivi Christiani magNo. numero detenti fuerunt, adeo discussa sit, ut tabulata, sub qua captivi agunt, collapsa, miseris oppresserit, quod tres vivi tantum eximi potuerin*. A detailed description of the explosion in 1578 by Gábor Ágoston, “Ottoman Gunpowder Production in Hungary in the Sixteenth Century: the *Baruthane* of Buda,” in *Hungarian–Ottoman Military and Diplomatic Relations in the Age of Süleyman the Magnificent*. Ed. by Géza Dávid – Pál Fodor. Budapest, 1994, 158–159.

of the building to which prisoners were sent by way of punishment was the so-called *Büdös Kula*, i.e. “Smelly *kula*”. During the day, however, most prisoners worked outside on the prison courtyard. It was here that they would issue documents carrying their own seal.¹⁵¹

The seals used by the prisoners were fully recognised; they were, in practice, the official and authentic seals of the prisoner community. This is shown by the seal employed (according to our present knowledge) by the prisoners between 1657 and 1661 (illustration No. 5). This seal probably replaced both the smaller and larger seals later on. The newer seal was very different from what had gone before, although the depictions were quite similar. The circle of words in Hungarian (*B[udai] CZONKA TORONY* = Stump Tower in Buda) reflected the new standard practice of Hungarian seals in this period. However, the inner part of the seal with its depictions of two forms of shackles and imagined implements of torture, symbolised continuity. In 1661, when agreeing to the sale of the property in Sopron county (mentioned above), the prisoners referred to this seal as their “usual” seal: “We give testimony to this our letter with the signature of the steward of our miserable crowd, and confirming it with our usual seal.”¹⁵²

The prisoners of the Stump Tower cut a new seal for the final time in 1678 (illustration No. 6).¹⁵³ The outer circle of words of this egg-shaped seal contained more words than before (*BVDAI CZONKA TORONY RABOK P[ECSEÉTJE]* = seal of the captives in the Stump Tower in Buda). The inner part depicted the coats-of-arms on a decorated Renaissance shield in accordance with the rules of heraldry and sphragistics. The three fetters resembled the depictions of shackles on the earlier versions, while above the shield the year 1678 was carved with an inverted seven.

Although the development of depictions and inscriptions on these seals differed from that of the village communities, the seals themselves constituted a significant element of the increasing prerogatives obtained

¹⁵¹For the lower dungeon: MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1314, Missiles Nos. 9288, 9300 and 26.680. For the cold cellar: *Ibid.*, No. 9307. For the “Smelly *kula*”: *Ibid.*, No. 9298. For the prison-court: *Ibid.*, Nos. 9284, 9297, 9299 and 31.525.

¹⁵²Nagy, *op. cit.*, 662.

¹⁵³In 1681 the captives set their seal in green wax when writing to the nobleman Péter Káldy: MOL Sibrik cs. lvt. [Archives of the Sibrik family] P 1865, Tétel 4: Káldy cs. lvt. [Archives of the Káldy family] Aláírás nélküli levelek [Unsigned letters] fol. 46.

by prisoner communities. In addition to the seal of Buda, we know of the seals of the prisoners in the Ottoman fortresses of Esztergom (illustration No. 7) and Vác used from the 1650s.¹⁵⁴ In Esztergom the seals were probably prepared in the first half of the decade. Before and during this period the prisoners seem to have used the seals of nobles to authenticate their documents.¹⁵⁵ Later, however, this practice became unknown. Instead the prisoners used their own seal which carried a long inscription in Hungarian (*ESTERGAMI TOMLOCZBEN NIOMORGO / RABOK* = the destitute captives in the prison of Esztergom) on the outer circle. Inside of this circular inscription, we can see a long-haired figure standing in a cloak whose hands are tied behind the back with a pair of foot straps; there is also a six-pointed star with a moon on his right, and a sun on his left. In 1683, as a prisoner at Esztergom, László Kisfaludy used the normal seal of the prisoner community to authenticate his letters: “By way of stronger testimony I gave my sealed letter using the seal of the community of the poor captives and confirming it by my handwriting.”¹⁵⁶ Yet, as we know, Kisfaludy generally authenticated his letters with a private seal bearing the initials “KL”.

The widespread use of the prisoner seals is demonstrated by the fact that we know of seals being used among the prisoner communities in Várad (illustration No. 8), Eger (illustration No. 9), and Szolnok.¹⁵⁷ Within two years of the fall of Várad, in 1662 Christian captives in the

¹⁵⁴The seal from Esztergom that was set in red wax or onto a small piece of paper (1654–1662): MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1314, Missiles Nos. 50.731–50.736 and 50.738. The seal of Vác with the monogram “VR” and two crosses (1659) is known only from a description made in the nineteenth century: Albert Nyáry, “Váczi rabközség pecsété, 1659 [The Seal of the Prisoner Community of Vác in 1659],” *Századok* 8 (1874) 585.

¹⁵⁵MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1314, Missiles No. 11.033 (1652) and No. 50.736 (1657).

¹⁵⁶Lengyel – Lovas, “Kisfaludy László,” 89: No. 15. For his own seal, see *Ibid.*, 92: No. 21.

¹⁵⁷The seal with the inscription *SZONAKI SZEGINY RABOK PECZETI* (the seal of the poor captives in Szolnok) in the middle of the crown shield and depicting a foot chain like the seal from Buda was published by Thaly, “Régi magyar községi pecsétetek,” and “Szólnoki rabság,” 215–216. For the incomplete and misunderstood descriptions of the seals from Várad and Eger, see Izsépy, “Rablevelek,” 317 and “Az egeri törökök,” 160. At the same time, we have no explanation for the fact that we never find a seal on the numerous letters of the captives of Kanizsa. However, in the small prison of Kaposvár in 1648 the captives’ letters were authenticated using a Hungarian nobleman’s seal. MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1314, Missiles No. 31.522.

city had cut themselves a seal with the circular inscription *VARADI SZEGENY RABOK PETSETI* (the seal of the poor captives in Várad). The seal of the captives in Eger was relatively simple and carried the monogram “EG”. Nevertheless, this seal was just as effective, in terms of its function, as any of the more decorative ones.¹⁵⁸

Evidence uncovered to date indicates that Ottoman prisoners in the Kingdom of Hungary did not use prisoners’ seals in letters to their keepers.¹⁵⁹ If they wished to authenticate their letters, they would do so with the private seal of the border fortress captain or one of his senior officers. In 1683, for example, “the poor Turkish captives” in Léva wrote to captain-general Pál Esterházy and confirmed their letter with the seal of vice-captain György Farkas carrying the inscription *FARKAS GIORGI*.¹⁶⁰ Turkish messengers and captives on release would send letters from Buda (or some other place in Ottoman Hungary) to their guarantors. Each letter would carry the seal of a Turkish official or a Hungarian nobleman.¹⁶¹ And while the Ottoman prisoners did not use their own seals, they doubtless sent their letters to inform their fellow countrymen about the intentions of the Christians. For their part, the Hungarian captives supplied valuable information about impending Ottoman raids¹⁶² to the

¹⁵⁸It is worth noting that the prisoner communities in Istanbul also used some kind of a seal, however, we could not give meaning to the illustrations on the two dry seals known to us, despite using an ultra-violet lamp. 1593: HL Törökkori Gyűjtemény [Collection of the Turkish Period] 1593/12, and without date, but from the middle of the seventeenth century: MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1314, Missiles No. 35.983.

¹⁵⁹See the letter of the Ottoman captives of Némétújvár to Ádám Batthyány (December 20, 1653): *Ibid.*, No. 33.635. Even recent Ottomanist research into seals has no information on these. A good summary: Claudia Römer, *Osmanische Festungsbesatzungen in Ungarn zur Zeit Murāds III. Dargestellt anhand von Petitionen zur Stellenvergabe*. (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse, Schriften der Balkan-Kommission, Philologische Abteilung, 35.) Wien, 1995, 103–116.

¹⁶⁰MOL Esterházy cs. lvt. P 125, Pál nádor No. 5928. For another example of the use of a nobleman’s seal by an Ottoman captive from Sárvár, the castle of the Nádasdy family (1627), see MOL Esterházy cs. lvt. P 123, Miklós nádor [Palatine Nicolaus Esterházy] Tétel II/i. fol. 120. For the Turks in Hatvan (1680), see MOL Esterházy cs. lvt. P 125, Pál nádor Nos. 6798–6799.

¹⁶¹Turkish seal: MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1314, Missiles No. 9309 (undated) and No. 49.233 (1655). Seal of a Hungarian nobleman: *Ibid.*, No. 49.224 (1652).

¹⁶²MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1314, Missiles No. 35.788. Cf. *Ibid.*, No. 9307. MOL Esterházy cs. lvt. P 125, Pál nádor No. 6796 (Eger, 1678) and Izsépy, “Rablevelek,” 324–

border fortress captain-generals in their sealed and rarely censored letters.¹⁶³

The liberation war at the end of the seventeenth century (1683–1699) marked the beginning of a new era in the life of Hungary and Central Europe. The defeat of the Ottomans and the establishment of the military border zones (*Militärgrenze*) concluded 150 years of Hungarian–Ottoman coexistence. The customary law of the border zone – a series of rules and regulations that determined the daily lives of tens of thousands of people – ceased to exist for ever. We have been left with little or nothing to remind us of those peculiar customs.

326; see further Jenei, “Iratok,” 206: No. 34/a and Jedlicska, “XVI. századi török–magyar levelek,” 699–700: No. XIX.

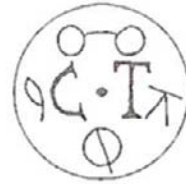
¹⁶³Cf. footnote 26.



No. 1.



No. 2.



No. 3.



No. 4.



No. 5.



No. 6.



No. 7.



No. 8.



No. 9.

Hungarian prisoner seals from the seventeenth century

FREED SLAVES AS SOLDIERS IN THE OTTOMAN FORTRESSES IN HUNGARY

KLÁRA HEGYI

In the mid-sixteenth century, approximately 13,000 soldiers were stationed in the fortresses of the province (*vilayet*) of Buda; this was the local (*yerlü*) force, which obviously did not include the Janissaries (*yeniçeri*) deployed from the Ottoman capital. Several payroll registers (*mevacib defteri*) covering about 11,000 men, or the majority of the local paid force, have survived from the 1540–1560s. Four of these registers contain sufficient data for a statistical evaluation of the place of origin of the soldiers. Two registers are particularly valuable. The first was compiled in 961 (December 7, 1553 – November 25, 1554) and originally covered all the fortresses in the *vilayet*. The register is incomplete since the beginning and end are missing; the remaining pages list the names of soldiers in ten fortresses.¹ With the exception of absentees and several officers with livelihoods from *timar*-estate incomes, the register contains brief personal remarks written by the clerk above the name of each of the 3,412 soldiers, including the soldier's place of origin (or previous residence) and his closest relatives. The second *mevacib defteri* was compiled several years later in 965 (October 24, 1557 – October 13, 1558); it lists paid soldiers in the 51 fortresses of the province of Buda.² This document includes similar personal remarks for 814 soldiers, who were probably new recruits.

By way of example, I cite several entries from both *defters*. From the 1554 register: Bekir Mahmud, from the village of Laz in the judicial district of Çelebibazarı, which lay in the sub-province of Bosna, who had a brother by the name of Piri (*Bosna sancağında Çelebi bazarı kazasına tabi Laz nam kariyeden olub Piri nam karındaşı varmış*); Kurd Abdullah,

¹Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung Ms. or. fol. 432.

²ÖNB Türkische Handschriften Mxt. 614.

from the castle of Voćin in the sub-province of Sirem, who had no relatives (*Sirem sancağında Vok'in nam kaleden olub akrabasından kimesnesi yoğmuş*).³ From the 1557 register: Yusuf Abdullah, from the town of Kragujevac in the judicial district of Rudnik, which lay in the sub-province of Semendire, who had an older brother, a *sipahi* by the name of Ahmed Divane (*Semendire sancağında Rudnik kazasında Kraguyofçe nam kasabadan olub Ahmed Divane nam sipahi ulu karındaşı varmış*); Hüseyin Abdullah, from the Veli Turgud district of the town of Valjevo, which lay in the sub-province of Semendire, whose father's name was Mihal (*Semendire sancağında Valyeva nam kasabada Veli Turgud mahallesinden [olub] babası adı Mihal idi*); Mehmed Abdullah, from the cami district of the town of Prozor in the sub-province of Kilis, whose elder and young brothers were called Hasan and Hüseyin (*Kilis sancağında Prozor kasabasında mescid mahallesinde Hasan ve Hüseyin biri ulu biri kiçi karındaşları varmış*).⁴

The most important lesson to be drawn from the entries in the two payroll registers is that the great majority of soldiers serving in the Ottoman fortresses in Hungary, 90.9 per cent in 1554 and 91.1 per cent in 1558, came from the Balkan Peninsula. At both points in time, the largest group was from Bosnia-Herzegovina: 1,383 men (40.5%) in 1554, and 432 (53.1%) in 1558. This region was followed by Serbia as well as the territory between the rivers Drava and Sava, which by this time was settled mainly by Serbs: 1,306 Serbs (38.3%) were serving as soldiers in Ottoman fortresses in Hungary in 1554, and the corresponding figure was 236 (29%) in 1558. The remaining soldiers, 12.1 per cent declining to 9 per cent, came from Bulgaria, Macedonia, Albania, Thessaly–Morea, and Thrace. In 1554, 89 soldiers from Anatolia or the Arab provinces (2.6%) were serving in the Buda *vilayet*, and the corresponding figure was 20 (2.5%) in 1558. In 1554, soldiers from Hungary itself included 69 Hungarians (2%) and 128 Turks and Serbs (3.8%). In 1558, these two categories amounted to 52 men (2.5%). At both points in time, the force was supplemented by several western Christian soldiers.

Bosnia-Herzegovina's leading role is obvious not only from the figures but also in other terms. In 1554, 15–20 per cent of the soldiers com-

³Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung Ms. or. fol. 432, p. 44.

⁴ÖNB Türkische Handschriften Mxt. 614, pp. 58, 115, 150.

ing from the Balkans, including 36 per cent of the Greeks, were family men, that is, they had children (the registers did not mention wives). But this was true of just 9.8 per cent of Bosnians and 8.2 per cent of Hercegovinians. These two countries were ahead in terms of both Islamisation and the provision of men for Ottoman military service: both of them produced large numbers of young men for whom service in the fortresses was a vocation.

Entries in the 1558 register almost always stated whether a soldier's brothers, listed as his closest relatives, were older or younger (*kendiden ulu/kiçi karındaş, büyük/küçük birader*). Where there were two brothers, the younger was more likely to become a soldier than the older: the register contains 391 such pairs, 160 of the first-born and 231 of the second-born were serving as soldiers in the fortresses. Most of the second-born came from rural areas. Their choice of career may have been motivated by the fact that the land comprising the small family farm could not be divided up any further. In large families, military service performed by older sons or relatives, in particular uncles, led younger members of the family to join up. Moreover, men from the same village or urban district would often encourage each other to join the same unit.

The notes reveal further reasons for joining the military – which was a natural reaction to the irreversibility of the situation faced by the Balkan peoples within the Ottoman Empire. In a minority of cases, however, compulsion was also a factor.

Two small relatively defenceless groups can be identified for whom military service was the only means of avoiding destitution and achieving social advancement. Orphans with no living relatives were the first of these groups; occasionally, they did not even know where they had spent their childhoods. For 11 men in 1554 and 12 men in 1558, military service had been the only opportunity for making a career. One such example was an orphan who had been living in Székesfehérvár when he converted to Islam. He was then employed at the local baths (*kendüzi İslama gelmişdür akrabadan kimesnesi olmayub ... dellak imiş*). Perhaps with the assistance of sponsors he acquired at the baths, the man was subsequently able to join the best infantry unit, the *müstahfiz*.⁵

The other group forced into military service were freed slaves, known as *azade* or *azadlu*. Regardless of whether peace or war had been de-

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 148.

clared, Hungary was subject to strife throughout this period. With some exaggeration, one can say that the taking of prisoners became a permanent means of gainful employment. Enemy soldiers as well as civilians in urban and rural areas were targeted. Few of the many hundreds and thousands of prisoners ended up as fortress soldiers, since the principal aim of taking a prisoner was to secure a ransom. In a small minority of cases, however, those holding captives would surrender their property for the sake of their own spiritual salvation. Even when prisoners were freed in this way, a fixed price still had to be paid. This was no longer a ransom but the adoption of Islam, which meant a man could never return to his former life, family, and place of residence. The liberation and conversion of a captive was regarded by the authorities as a more complete break with the past than an ordinary voluntary conversion. Whereas the personal remarks on voluntary converts list their Christian parents, uncles, and brothers living in the former place of residence as full relatives, they make no mention of the families and former places of residence of freed captives, while they do list their Muslim children. After this radical break with the past, the emancipated slave was likely to become a soldier in a fortress – particularly if he had been a soldier before.

Fifty-four (1.6%) of the 3,412 soldiers mentioned in the 1554 register were freed slaves: 23 Hungarians, 24 other Europeans, and 7 men from the Middle East. Their share of the total was small but not negligible. Indeed, they were more numerous in the fortresses of the province of Buda than were the Albanians (1.3%) or the Greeks (1.1%).

The former masters of 11 of the 23 Hungarians (referred to as *Macar oğlanı*) were soldiers, mostly high-ranking officers: *alaybeğis*, fortress captains (*dizdar*), corps-*ağas*, and Janissaries. Four of the men had been held by local administrative officials: the *kethüda* and the *voyvoda* of Mehmed Pasha, the governor of Buda, who had passed away in 1548, another deceased district governor (*sancakbeyi*), and the chancellor (*reis-ülküttab*) of the imperial council. Thus, with the exception of the latter, the prisoners' captors had been local dignitaries on service in Hungary. They had either acquired their captives here or they had brought them back to their native land, as indicated by the fact that nine slaves were adult family men with one-four children by the time they were freed. Six prisoners were freed by owners who appear to have held religious posts and who were all from outside of Hungary: a Friday preacher

(*hatib*) from Vidin, two teachers (*hoca*) from Újlak in Szerémség and from Hamidili in Anatolia, two individuals from Szendrő and one from Konya – whose occupation we do not know but all three had taken the pilgrimage to Mecca. In several instances, the notes only reveal the names of the former captors.

The other group of 24 freed slaves were men of some other European nationality. The impression gained is that most of them – perhaps all of them – were actually prisoners of war rather than captives from towns and villages. The group comprised ten Croats (*Hrvat oğlanı*), three Slovenes (*İsloven*), a man from the Adriatic region (*Körfes*), two Moldavians (*Boğdan/Karaboğdan*), two Frenchmen or simply West Europeans (*Frenk*), four Germans (*Nemçe/Alaman*), and two Czechs (*Çeh*). All of them had converted to Islam and most of their former captors had been soldiers. In this group, which was marginally larger than the Hungarian group, just three of the men had children.

The seven prisoners from the Middle East form a rather mysterious group. The notes mention merely their nationality and the names of their former masters. The only reference to their lives before capture is that the second name of each of them is Abdullah, a name borne mostly by non-Muslims who had converted to Islam. This indicates that even the largest group consisting of four persons and denoted as Arab (*Arab oğlanı*) by the clerk, had not originally been either Muslims or Arabs, but probably dark-skinned or black slaves from Africa.⁶ In addition to the Arabs, the group also contained a Kurd (*Kürd oğlanı*), an Abyssinian (*Habeş*), and a Circassian (*Çerkes*). Their former owners were men of high rank: *sancakbeyis*, *ağas*, soldiers of the court, and – exceptionally – an Istanbul butcher. The Abyssinian and Kurd had been owned by the same man, the *ağa* of the cavalymen serving in the fortress of Szanda northeast of Buda, who was already deceased (*mukaddema beşli ağası olub fevt olan Hubyar ağa*). This and the other cases demonstrate that the death of a captor often brought freedom to his prisoners.

In total, the 1558 register mentions 14 freed slaves, 1.7 per cent of the 814 soldiers for whom there are personal remarks: their share of the total thus accords with the figure for 1554. There were nine Hungarians, five

⁶For the multiple meaning of the term Arab, including black, see Ronald C. Jennings, "Black Slaves and Free Blacks in Ottoman Cyprus, 1590–1640," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 30 (1987) 288–289.

other Europeans, but none from the Middle East. All of them were converts, and their former captors were of the same social class as in 1554. The only novelty is that the entries for the Hungarians mention the place of birth, usually a village. The group of other Europeans comprised two Croats, a Slovene, a Czech, and an Albanian or Macedonian from a village in the district of Sarigöl. The Czech prisoner had been captured during a foray into Bohemia–Moravia (*Çeh Moravin akınından kalmış Çeh oğlanı olub*).

Prisoners who advanced to become fortress soldiers really had no chance of turning back. Those listed in 1554 were present in the payroll register of 1557–1558 in exactly the same ratio as the rate of change in the guards. Just two of the Hungarian prisoners who had been drafted to the *azabs* in Esztergom were still there, but this was of no particularly significance since the *azabs* were characterised by a high degree of mobility. On the other hand, six of the eight Hungarian prisoners drafted to the more stable and less mobile *müstahfiz* were still in place after four years. All of the prisoners on the 1558 register can still be found in the next payroll register for 1558–1559.⁷ Thus, although forced into conversion and then military service as the price of their freedom, the former captives did not seek to escape home at the first opportunity. And yet there must have been many such opportunities in view of the perpetual conflict being fought on Hungarian soil. In fact, the men were just as persistent in service as any other group of fortress soldiers.

All of them had been freed as the captives of private individuals, and so they were few in number. The large number of slaves owned by the state and central treasury did not end up as fortress soldiers, or at least none were to be found in Ottoman fortresses in Hungary. Many of them served among the cavalry units in the Istanbul barracks. Indeed, the proportion doing so was even higher than the proportion of prisoners of private individuals serving in the fortress guards.

In a 1578–1579 register⁸ covering 2,434 men in the court cavalry (525 *ulufeciyan-i yemin*, 745 *ulufeciyan-i yesar* and 1,164 *silahdar*) mention is made of the nationality of soldiers who appear to have swapped imprisonment for military service in central Ottoman units. The nationality

⁷ÖNB Türkische Handschriften Mxt. 633.

⁸*Osmanski izvori za isljamizacionnitate procesi na Balkanite (XVI–XIX v.)*. (Serija izvori, 2.) Pod red. M. Kalicin – A. Velkov – E. Radušev. Sofia, 1990, 43–77.

was written alongside the name in the case of 555 men, one-quarter of the court cavalry. The document indicates that 165 of them were from the Balkan Peninsula (most of whom – 90 – were Albanians); we do not know how these men came to be among the court horsemen. On the other hand, 390 men had been captured in the course of frontier clashes. The largest group were the 138 Hungarians (5.7% of the 2,434 cavalry mentioned in the register). The 98 Croats and Slovenes (4%) had succumbed during the Habsburg–Ottoman struggle, and 47 Western Europeans (1.9%): Austrians, French, and German must have been captured during the conflicts in Hungary. The cavalry also included men from the north-eastern frontier of the Empire: 107 Caucasians (4.4%; Circassians, Georgians, Armenians, Abkhazians) and several Russians.

Slaves serving in the military or suitable for military service were a valuable asset to the Ottoman state, which was founded on military slavery. Wherever possible, they were taken to the centre, trained, and used to strengthen and reinforce the court salaried troops. If necessary, they were also sent back, as the sultan's soldiers, to the frontier zones. But such large numbers of volunteers from all corners of the Empire were arriving in these areas that it made more sense to sell the prisoners at the Empire's slave markets rather than train them as soldiers on the spot. Moreover, as other studies in this volume have shown, ransom slavery was an even more profitable option which explains the relatively low number of the locally freed soldiers on the Hungarian frontier.

THE RANSOM OF ALI *BEY* OF KOPPÁNY
THE IMPACT OF CAPTURING SLAVES ON TRADE
IN OTTOMAN HUNGARY

FERENC SZAKÁLY

The Hungarian soldiers of the border fortresses Veszprém and Várpalota, were favoured by fortune of arms in the autumn of 1583: in a clash they managed to capture Ali, the belligerent governor (*sancakbeyi*) of the neighbouring Ottoman district (*sancak*) seated in the border fortress of Koppány. Ali *bey* had caused a lot of trouble to the soldiers of the Hungarian fortresses since his arrival in Koppány: he had several times looted those areas around Lake Balaton that had not surrendered to the Ottomans yet. That is why, in 1583, the commander of Veszprém, István Istvánffy and the captain of Várpalota, Péter Ormándy decided to discourage the *bey* from continuing his activity by a relatively large-scale incursion. Istvánffy set off with 200 *hussars* and 300 infantrymen for the arranged meeting point near Badacsony. But instead of Ormándy he was encountered by the news that Ali *bey* had started to plunder again and that he was raiding the villages near Balatonhídvég and preparing for the siege of Veszprém. On hearing the news, Istvánffy turned back to block the enemy's path. Soon he found them and in the ensuing encounter the Ottomans seemed to gain the upper hand. The battle was almost over when other troops appeared behind the Ottomans. Initially they were thought to be Ottomans and Istvánffy was about to withdraw his troops when it turned out that they were the soldiers of Ormándy heading for the meeting at Badacsony. Thus the encircled Ottomans could not withstand the attack for a long time. 77 people, among them many senior officers, were taken prisoner and a lot of soldiers died in the battle. Ali was knocked off his horse and was taken captive suffering minor injuries.¹

¹Gyula Erdélyi, *Veszprém város története a török idők alatt* [The Story of the Town Veszprém during the Ottoman Rule]. Veszprém, 1913, 90–91. The *bey* was captured by a young soldier from Várpalota, called Gábor Fóthy; Pál Jedlicska, *Adatok erdődi báró Pálffy Miklós, a győri hősnek életrajza és korához 1552–1600* [Data on the Era and Biog-

As the clash occurred during “peace time” when, in principle, both sides prohibited plundering,² in the following months both the Hungarians and the Ottomans presented their own versions of the events to explain and excuse themselves. The Hungarians accused Ali “of going to Veszprém with thousands of soldiers”, that is, he was preparing for a siege and thus for the derangement of the status quo, instead of a simple raid that was a remissible sin even in the eyes of the enemy at that time. Sinan pasha, the governor-general of Buda, tried to defend his case by emphasising that the *bey* “was proceeding with his own people in the country of the mighty sultan, in his own villages (in the occupied territory belonging to the *sancak* of Koppány) when the people of Veszprém, hearing this, attacked him.” He tried to strengthen his arguments by saying that Ali had not carried with him multibarreled pieces and guns, which would have been indispensable for the siege of a castle.³

The incursions around Koppány both on the part of the Ottoman and the Hungarian border troops facing each other were not rare at all; what is more, local clashes were sometimes as fierce as smaller battles. Koppány served as a kind of forward observation post among the castles of the Ottoman frontier, which kept an alert and constant watch on the Hungarian fortresses, on every single movement of the garrison soldiers. That explained why the most aggressive and cunning *beys* had been sent to this important post, who did not allow the opposing forces a minute’s peace and sought to extend the “Empire of the mighty sultan” by every possible means. Their endeavours, however, found their match in the Hungarian garrison soldiers of the neighbouring fortresses, mainly Veszprém, Pápa, and Várpalota. Their brilliantly executed adventures, cunning tricks, and constant readiness for war were “acknowledged at the highest level” by the complaints abounding in the letters of the pashas of Buda, saying that they were constantly lurking about the Ottoman fort-

raphy of the Hero of Győr, Miklós Pálffy, Baron of Erdőd]. Eger, 1897, 204: No. 249 (January 22, 1586, from Márton Thury to Pálffy).

²“Peace” only meant at that time that a peace treaty was in force and there was no open declared war between the Habsburg and Ottoman rulers but the local clashes at the border continued with the same fervour.

³Sándor Takáts – Ferenc Eckhart – Gyula Szekfű, *A budai basák magyar nyelvű levelezése* [The Hungarian Letters of the Pashas of Buda]. I. 1553–1589. Budapest, 1915, 309: No. 280 and 311: No. 282 (Buda, April 22, 1584 and May 25, 1584, from Sinan pasha to Archduke Ernest).

resses, that they were rambling as far as the Danube, and they were always making the Ottoman soldiers fight against them and so on and so forth.

Koppány, which ranked among the important settlements in the Hungarian territory under Ottoman rule, irresistibly attracted the always unpaid and poor troops of the border fortresses with its rich Muslim merchants and wealthy storehouses.⁴ Their attempts were crowned with success several times, which is also testified by the fact that the *beys* of Koppány were frequent “guests” in the prisons of the Hungarian border fortresses. For example, one of the successors of the *bey* captured in 1583, had no good fortune either. He was taken captive in late 1587 or early 1588 by the Hungarians in his own castle and not in an open field.⁵

The continuation of Ali *bey*’s story, the description of the procrastination of his discharge by both states deserves a separate study because from the surviving exchange of letters a more detailed picture can be drawn about the mechanism of two systems of custom – the forms of exacting ransom and the practice of using guarantors –, which also makes it possible to clarify some common misconceptions.

Most of the letters used below have been waiting in well-known publications for 75–100 years to be discovered and interpreted to create a coherent story. Four additional letters, found recently, contribute to the disclosure and elucidation of several details which were rather obscure before.⁶

⁴A report from 1587 considers Koppány one of the most significant towns of the Ottomans in Hungary. Sándor Takáts, “Berenhidai Huszár Péter,” in Idem, *Régi magyar kapitányok és generálisok* [Old Hungarian Captains and Generals], s. I. et a., 310; cf. Ferenc Szakály, “Tolna megye negyven esztendeje a mohácsi csata után 1526–1566 [The Forty Years of Tolna County after the Battle of Mohács],” in *Tanulmányok Tolna megye történetéből*. II. Ed. by Attila Puskás. Szekszárd, 1969, 52 and Előd Vass, “Törökkoppány 1556. évi első török adóösszeírása [The First Ottoman Census of Törökkoppány of 1556],” in *Somogy Megye Múltjából (Levéltári Évkönyv)*. III. Ed. by József Kanyar. Kaposvár, 1972, 57–75.

⁵Takáts, “Berenhidai Huszár,” 310–317.

⁶For a general discussion of the topic, see Sándor Takáts, “A török és a magyar raboskodás [Ottoman and Hungarian Captivity],” in Idem, *Rajzok a török világból* [Sketches from the Turkish World]. I. Budapest, 1915, 160–303 (this is a study abundant in valuable data, but it does not provide a systematic description of the ransom taking system, and its evaluations sometimes seem to be too naive). Takáts published data on the same subject in many other studies; see the bibliography of his works in Sándor Takáts,

If the soldiers in Veszprém and Várpalota thought in 1583 that the ransom paid for Ali *bey* would help solve their financial problems, they were utterly mistaken, like in many other cases. They were left with only a small haul, while the senior officers, the so called “major captives”, who had been caught during the skirmishes, were regularly demanded by the ruler himself. Usually not because he wanted to use the ransom money for central purposes, e.g. covering the military expenses, but to elegantly present one of his favourites or creditors with it. This happened at that time, too. Ali *bey* was given to the secret councillor *Obersthofmeister* Leonhard Harrach. Apart from “good fame and nice honesty”, the fighters taking part in the struggle were only given some reward or advanced payment, which would have been due anyway. Sometimes it occurred that they were slightly reprimanded and their case was supervised under the pretext of breaching the peace.

The negotiations about the ransom for the *bey* reached a near-agreement stage some time in late summer of 1584. On behalf of the Aulic War Council (*Hofkriegsrat*) it was councillor Erasmus Braun who dealt with the affair. He demanded four market towns to stand surety in return for the temporary discharge of the *bey*. The Ottoman leaders in Hungary – the pasha of Buda as their head – must have considered the release of Ali *bey* extremely important and urgent because not only did they fulfil the demand but, rather thoughtlessly, they added two more market towns as sureties to precipitate the negotiations. What is more, the treasurer (*defterdar*) of Buda, Mustafa *bey*, who claimed to be an old friend of Ali, deemed it necessary to add his own person to the bailsmen. In his letter of October 9, 1584 he informed Braun that “I will be a guarantor for him together with the pasha.” He asked to hand the *bey* over to the bailsmen sent to Komárom and at the same time he let Braun know that he had sent 10,000 florins out of the ransom of the *bey*. He still cannot have felt this enough to prove his goodwill as he ensured Braun that “even if we had not been guarantors for him Ali *bey*’s ransom would have had to be paid because those in the towns belong to the mighty emperor (that is to the

Művelődéstörténeti tanulmányok a XVI–XVII. századból [Studies on the Cultural History of the 16th and 17th Centuries]. Ed by Kálmán Benda. Budapest, 1961, 377–408. It is worth citing the memoirs of an “afflicted” person: *Magyar Simplicissimus* [Hungarian Simplicissimus]. Ed. by József Túróczi-Trostler. Budapest, 1956, 183–200. The latest comprehensive treatment of the topic is Géza Pálffy’s study in the present volume (see the literature quoted there).

has-estates of the sultan) and they are his majesty's serfs and we do not want to ruin them."⁷

On the same day Sinan pasha also sent a letter to Braun, in which he repeated the promises of Mustafa almost word for word and emphasised that "not only they (that is the market towns) will be guarantors but we, too, and his ex[cellency], the treasurer."⁸ These unnecessary promises testified to the confusion of the leadership in Buda and convinced the Aulic War Council that they could exact the highest possible ransom for the release of the *bey*.

The delegates and judges of the six market towns – Ráckeve, Nagymaros, Vác, Nagykőrös, Cegléd, and Tolna – arrived at Komárom some days after October 9 to take the *bey* home on bail. In the presence of the royal commissioners and the guarantors, Ali obliged himself to pay the following ransom: "first of all 30,000 florins in cash, 100 good oxen, two head of horses with silver and golden saddles and harnesses, on which he – like a vizier-pasha – used to go to the court, eight head of horses with blankets, a Persian silk carpet, two rolls of gold-brocaded silk, four hundred aigrettes, two woven felt rugs, and two Hungarian prisoners: István Szenhely in Constantinople, and László Lévy in Buda..."

On his release Ali *bey* paid the 10,000 florins his guarantors had brought with themselves from Buda and promised to send 5,000 florins more to Komárom in six days, furthermore he would procure the release of László Lévy. He was to fulfil the rest of his obligation within half a year from the time the six days were over. The representatives of the above listed market towns included Ali *bey*'s promises in their warranty and declared in the name of their fellow townspeople that if the *bey* failed to fulfil his duties, the whole debt would fall on them and they could be stopped anywhere to pay it; moreover, they could never find legal protection against Leonhard Harrach.⁹ With this they tied their fate to

⁷Takáts – Eckhart – Szekfű, *A budai basák*, 320–321: No. 291.

⁸*Ibid.*, 321–322: No. 292.

⁹MOL Kincstári Levéltárak [Archives of the Treasury]. MKA Városi és falusi pecséttel elátott levelek [Letters with town and village seals]. Pest county. Vác. Without dates. The following persons were present at the event:

Tolna: judges Mihály Szabó, Kelemen Szabó, Pál Szabó; Péter Sebestyén, Bálint Mészáros, and scribe Miklós.

Ráckeve: judges Cvetko and István Szabó (that is the town had two judges, a Serb and a Hungarian one, on the basis of the ethnic division; cf. the *tahrir defteris* of 1546

Ali's, though unwillingly; their movement outside the territory under Ottoman rule and their trade depended on whether the *bey* was ready to fulfil his duties and keep the deadlines. (To show the value of the ransom here are some lines from the letter of Ferhad pasha from 1589: according to him “never has a captured *bey* given more than thirty thousand florins, what is more, if we take the order of God into account, no man is worth more than forty thousand ospora [*akçe*], that is one thousand florins.” Not even the 30,000 florins could be collected since “Sinan pasha gave his own most confident men to Ali as escort and after searching the provinces of Buda and Temesvár they could not collect more than 1,500 florins.”)¹⁰

Ali only partially fulfilled those promises he swore to do in six days. He seems to have sent the 5,000 florins, at least it was not asked for later, but he could not procure the release of Lévy. Instead, the pasha of Buda, who must have realised that he had exaggerated his promises the previous year, tried to reinterpret the text of the agreement as early as the beginning of 1585. He looked for arguments in the negotiations preceding the contract: Back in 1584 the Aulic War Council did not ask for László Lévy but for Emilio Cordavato held in Constantinople. As, however, news came during the talks that Cordavato had been released by the sultan, this demand became pointless, and the question of asking for Lévy, who was kept in Buda, was raised. As we could see, the latter version came up in the agreement. Some time before February 22, 1585 Sinan pasha still claimed that the demand for the release of Lévy was

and 1562: Gyula Káldy-Nagy, *Kanuni devri Budin tahrir defteri (1546–1562)*. [Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Yayınları, 177.] Ankara, 1971, 85–95); Benedek Füzes, Miklós Szócs.

Vác: judge András Fodor; Márton Takách, Ferenc Koncz.

Nagymaros: judge Mihály Zobonya; Benedek Tőkés, Márton Mezey.

Nagykőrös: judges János Lázár and Ferenc Köncöl; Orbán Somogyi, János Sütő or Csötő (Chieötew).

Cegléd: judges Orbán Vörös and Ferenc Péntzes; János Balogh, Dömjén Che.

The warrant was confirmed with the “usual” seal of the towns. The photos of the seals of Cegléd, Tolna, Nagymaros, and Vác can be seen in *Magyarország története képekben* [The History of Hungary in Pictures]. Ed. by Domokos Kosáry. Budapest, 1971, 169: Nos. 7–10.

¹⁰Takáts – Eckhart – Szekfű, *op. cit.*, 487: No. 416 (June 6, 1589, from Ferhad pasha to Pálffy).

unlawful, for Cordavato was not kept captive by the sultan any more, therefore this point became automatically annulled.

Naturally, this flimsy trick was not welcomed by the Aulic War Council. In his reply Braun threatened to enforce the sanctions of the letter of guarantee if the pasha was to temporise by “disputing” the contract. He wrote: “So that nothing should be left behind from the ransom for the pasha, the guarantors can be detained and their goods can be taken from them”.¹¹

In order that his words should be taken seriously, at the beginning of 1585 he arrested Bálint Mészáros, a merchant from Tolna, coming to Komárom to buy goods. The purpose of the impeding only seemed to be intimidation, as the merchant was released after begging for it persistently. In fact his aim was that Mészáros should spread the news of the event in Buda and in the affected market towns and thereby urge both the Ottoman lords and the guarantors to act more quickly. Mészáros had to deliver the threatening letters to the market towns, too.

Hardly had five months passed since undertaking the guarantee, the reasonable waiting time, when the market towns could have a taste of the dangers to be expected. It was in the slightest form though, but not without any harm. It was Braun himself who boasted that Mészáros “had already bought some wares from the merchants when they saw that I took him captive, they took the wares back from him.”¹² The attitude of the other merchants is understandable, since nobody dared to do business with a man who incurred the anger of the powerful people and whose solvency and even personal freedom was endangered.

The six-month deadline of the contract was about to come to an end in late April 1585 but the *bey* did not seem to hurry with the payment of the ransom. Though Miklós Pálffy, the commander of Komárom, sent that amount of the ransom to Vienna he had received, this was not more than the sum collected during the days the contract was made.¹³ In addition, the *bey* sent some kind of horses but Braun returned them saying that they were either swayed or “wicked”, that not even the grooms would

¹¹*Ibid.*, 329–330: No. 300 (February 22, 1585, from Braun to Sinan pasha).

¹²*Ibid.*, 330–331: No. 301 (February 22, 1585, from Braun to the market town Tolna). The writer of the letter first called the arrested merchant of Tolna Bálint Mészáros, then corrected the name to Benedek Mészáros; the previous form is correct.

¹³Jedlicska, *op. cit.*, 130: No. 103 (April 15, 1585).

dare to mount them, so they were inappropriate for the high demands defined in the letter of bail.

Naturally, Braun did not easily tolerate with this situation. As Ali was reluctant to remember his promise to contribute to the releasing of Lévy, not only did Braun threaten to capture the bailsmen but to put an end to the system of guarantors; the unusual behaviour by Ali, he wrote, created such a situation that in the future no Ottoman high-ranking person would be let free on bail and they would have to stay in prison until the whole amount of ransom was paid.¹⁴

Affected by the threats, Mustafa, treasurer in Buda, changed tactics. He asked Braun to be reasonable with his guarantors and warned him of the preposterousness of his procedure, that is if the merchants of the market towns were impeded in their movement, not only the Ottoman treasury but the sanctioning party would suffer damage, as the residents of the six market towns paid tax not only to the sultan but “they were the tax-paying serfs of your Highness”. All this, however, was just an answer to the threats and a pretext for bringing up the well-known excuses in Lévy’s case. He again argued that Cordavato had been discharged, and István Szenhely had died in the meantime, so these demands lost their topicality. Lévy could not be released because he was not anybody’s prisoner, but that of the “thirtieth collector of the emperor” (probably the customs officer in Buda), who owed 40,000 florins to the treasury and wanted to pay it back from the ransom he hoped to get for Lévy.¹⁵

The treasurer obviously exaggerated when he estimated the ransom for Lévy 40,000 florins, as he did not belong to the high-ranking persons of the border areas, so they could hardly expect more ransom for him than the Christian side for Ali. He could have been kept prisoner for a hundred years, still he would have had no chance of paying that amount of money. The false statement did not aim at convincing Braun, rather it was a veiled threat. Someone who could read behind the lines could understand that the stronger they demanded the release of Lévy the higher his ransom would be.

The veiled threat reached the desired effect. The roles were changed and now it was the Aulic War Council that referred to humanity and fairness. They tried to excuse Lévy saying that “he is a poor guy who,

¹⁴Takáts – Eckhart – Szekfü, *op. cit.*, 336–337: No. 305 (April 25, 1585).

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 340: No. 307 (May 19, 1585).

together with his father and brother, would not be able to give even 30 florins out of his possessions, because everything they have is in your realm.” But at the same time as excusing Lévy, Braun took to attacking by reversing the tactics the Ottomans had been using against him: the pasha excused Ali’s delay by saying that he was poor and had nothing to pay from; they were quite aware of the financial situation of the *bey*, on the basis of which they could have asked him for twice as much ransom. Otherwise, if he did not have enough money why had he undertaken the payment of 30,000 florins. This time it was Braun who took the fate of the guarantors to heart: “It is better to protect the poor, who are rather miserable anyway, and to take the well-being of the rulers into consideration and not to conceal these for the sake of any unworthy Jew” (who he thought Lévy was kept prisoner by).¹⁶

The frequent exchange of letters in the previous months came to an end between May 1585 and February 1586 probably due to some compromise that we do not have information about. Ali *bey* must have been given some time to try to collect his ransom money in Constantinople. The silence was only broken by a letter of the pasha of Buda in which he answered Braun’s enquiries by writing that Ali was still in Constantinople and that he had already written him not to delay.¹⁷

But Ali returned without any money to the province where his activity had not been crowned with too much success. Though he managed to win the favour of the Grand Vizier Osman pasha and other high-ranking officials to support his case, their request to Emperor Rudolf II to reduce the ransom for the *bey* did not gain a hearing.¹⁸

However, the case at that time began to be quite awkward and dangerous for Sinan pasha, who had always found it easy to make promises, as he could be summoned any time by the Porte to account for his actions. In answer to the letter of the governor of Hungary, Archduke Ernest, in which he disclosed that the Habsburg ruler was not willing to reduce the ransom, Sinan replied that he had opposite information about the king’s intention and asked that if he had changed his mind in the meantime, he should inform Sinan about that in his own message. At the same time, contradicting his own previous statement, Sinan pasha irrit-

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 341–342: No. 308 (May 1585).

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 354: No. 318 (October 30, 1585).

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 358–359: No. 322 (February 4, 1586).

ably tried to separate himself from the whole affair. Allegedly, he did not become a guarantor for the *bey*, what he had done so far was more than enough because they would not have received the 15,000 florins without his interference.¹⁹ In his next letter he changed tactics again and tried to present himself as the victim of the “cunning” Ali *bey*: Ali had set off for the Porte with the intention of either paying the ransom – depending on the result of his journey – or giving himself into the hands of the people capturing him. When he returned from Constantinople, he showed some letters according to which the emperor cancelled his debt. Had he, Sinan, suspected that Ali did not tell the truth he would not have let him go but would have sent him straight to Komárom. At any rate, he promised that he would write a letter to the Porte and ask to send Ali back to Hungary in irons.²⁰ It was, of course, a rather flimsy excuse and it convinced Archduke Ernest that it was high time to have a recourse to much more severe measures which could only be the threatening and punishment of the market towns concerned. The threatening letters had to be forwarded to Ali and to the market towns by Miklós Pálffy, who gradually took over the case from Braun.

At the same time the merchants leaving the Ottoman territories were again held up from time to time. The citizens of the market towns tried to apply their own modest means: begging and seeking protection. In vain did they go to Ali. When they visited him some time in April or May 1586, he brought up exactly the same flimsy excuses as the ones we had the chance to see in the letter of the pasha of Buda. He refused the threatening letter by Pálffy saying that “the order does not have the seal of his royal highness, as he would recognise the seal of the king; on the other hand he said that the mighty emperor told him that his majesty cancelled the rest of his ransom; and if his majesty had not remitted it, seeing his sealed letter, he will pay what he owes”. Naturally, the inhabitants of the threatened market towns were not content with this reply so they hurried to Buda for help. The pasha – as it could be foreseen from his previous letter – was not willing to deal with the matter any longer but sent them to the treasurer. The groundless optimism of Mustafa *bey* was not changed by the experiences of the previous one and a half years. He continued to encourage them by saying “do not fear you

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 360–361: No. 324 (March 29, 1586).

²⁰*Ibid.*, 370–371: No. 333 (November 23, 1586).

poor creatures as long as you can see me, because that money must be collected at any rate”, and if need be he was ready to denounce Ali at the Porte. The guarantors, who had already learnt how much they could trust promises like this, turned to Pálffy himself in a joint petition and begged him to be lenient with them. It was the first time they had spoken out the truth in connection with their suretyship (“we were forced to undertake it”), but were eager to convince Pálffy of their readiness as he was also pressed by Vienna to get the money and wrote that “we are ready to take pains in the case” once it occurred like this.²¹

The court and the Aulic War Council almost seemed to show more interest in the case of Ali’s ransom than in the military affairs these days. Orders from Vienna kept arriving in Komárom and Pálffy’s reports travelled back continuously. On the basis of Harrach’s complaint, Archduke Ernest instructed Pálffy to arrest the bailsmen, who tried to dodge fulfilling their duties by means of different excuses, and to keep them in custody until they paid their arrears.²² Harrach himself did not spare paper. In Vienna, far away from the scene of the events, and having 15,000 florins in his hands, he thought that there was no reason to wait any longer, but it was time to show the spear-head and thus to deter the bailsmen from resorting to evasions.²³

Pálffy, who was hindered by this winding like a serpent case in his other, more important duties, acted upon the instructions. On July 9, 1586 he reported that he had arrested scribe Péter, the rich merchant and some other traders from Tolna. He allowed Péter to go to Buda as a guarantor (this time not only for Ali but also for the other merchants kept in Komárom) to break the news to the deputy (*kethüda*) of the pasha. Soon he let the other merchants follow him with all their goods – obviously in return of some indemnity – so that they would also complain about the events. He made them promise to return and go back to prison if the *bey* was not willing to pay. Counting on the disapproval of the court officials, he explained his act by the fact that the *bey* could not do anything anyway until the new pasha arrived in Buda to replace the dismissed Sinan pasha.²⁴ About a month later, on August 19 he wrote to Harrach

²¹The same place as cited in note 9. Buda, May 12, 1586 (from the six guarantor market towns to Pálffy).

²²Jedlicska, *op. cit.*, 236: No. 319 (June 8, 1586).

²³*Ibid.*, 239. No. 328 (June 16, 1586).

²⁴*Ibid.*, 248–249: No. 346.

hopefully that the case of the ransom would probably move away from the deadlock. His men were negotiating with the pasha about what to do, and the guarantors and the arrested people were keen on solving the problem.²⁵

Pálffy, who apparently tried to defend the merchants as well, had an ally on the Ottoman side, too. Osman *bey*, chief customs officer of Vác, offered a kind of united action to Pálffy through János Trombitás, former resident of Nagymaros, at that time steward of Komárom. Osman asked Pálffy to write him a menacing letter in the case of Ali's ransom. Thereupon he, Osman, would undertake the guarantee saying that the indemnity must be paid. He also wrote that the delegates of the guarantor towns had already talked to Ferhad, the new pasha, who had promised to put Ali in chains if he continued to postpone paying.²⁶ Osman, who had defended the merchants of the territory under Ottoman rule on other occasions, too,²⁷ must have thought when making his offer that he could be more severe with Ali, or he would get more support from the Ottoman administration. Undertaking the guarantee was not without dangers for him either and the value of his offer is not diminished by the fact that he, as a chief official of the border area, was partly responsible for and partly interested in ensuring the continuity of trade and the protection of merchants.

In the meantime, however, the other side also reduced its demands, though the nature of this "forbearance" is quite informative. While the court would not hear of remitting the money and the presents (animals and rugs, etc), the demand for the release of the prisoners faded away slowly and thereby the only thread that connected, though loosely, the case of Ali's indemnity with the situation in the Hungarian border areas was cut. The fact that their case was separated from that of the *bey's* ransom is testified by the letter of László Lévy to Pálffy on September 7, 1586. In this Lévy asked for the safe conduct of scribe András Váczi and

²⁵*Ibid.*, 263: No. 379 (August 19, 1586, from Pálffy to Harrach).

²⁶*Ibid.*, 264–265: No. 382 (August 19, 1586, from Trombitás to Pálffy).

²⁷Sándor Takáts, "A magyar tőzsérek és kereskedők pusztulása [The Perdition of the Hungarian Cattle Traders and Merchants]," in *Szegény magyarok* [Poor Hungarians], s. I. et a., 151; Lajos Fekete, *A törökkori Vác egy XVI. századi összeírás alapján* [Vác in the Ottoman Era on the Basis of a 16th-Century Register]. (Értekezések a történeti tudományok köréből, XXVI/1.) Budapest, 1942, 24–25.

scribe Mátyás, but he did not mention at all that he should have been set free six months after the release of Ali at the latest.²⁸

Pálffy's hopes were not ungrounded as the *bey*, probably owing to the intervention of Osman and the threat of the new pasha of Buda, commenced to pay his debts in instalments after a long time. That he did not do it fully of his own free will is shown, apart from news coming from Buda, by his declaration that he had been dismissed (*mazul*) from office in Buda. This time he did not bring too much either, but it was something at last. In October, there were 54 bullocks at the ferry of Komárom sent by him, his rugs were in Vác and his horses in Szécsény waiting to be transported.²⁹

Thereby the case of the ransom dragging on for two years came to a standstill without being solved.³⁰ For a year it did not appear in the sources and, as we know Pálffy's correspondence quite well, it proves to the fact that neither parties dealt with it. In 1588, however, the dispute resumed with renewed hate.

As it has been mentioned before, one of Ali's successors in Koppány got into Hungarian hands in the winter of 1587, while another *bey* of the very same *sancak*, probably called Receb, had been captured, together with the district governor of Pécs in the battle of Kacorlak (Zala county), on August 9, 1587.³¹ The fate of the two latter *beys* was greatly influenced by the case of Ali since everyone could draw some kind of lesson from the experience of the past few years. The Hungarians of the border areas refused to send the new high-ranking captive to the court and protested heavily against its practice to demand those prisoners for whom they could expect a larger amount of money.³² The pasha of Buda

²⁸Jedlicska, *op. cit.*, 272–273: No. 395.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 285: No. 411 (October 14, 1586, from Márton Thury to Pálffy) and 295: No. 438 (January 15, 1587, from Archduke Ernest to Pálffy).

³⁰In the meantime the idea of harassing the guarantors came up again: on January 20, 1587 the Magyar Kamara (Hungarian Chamber) informed Archduke Ernest that Bálint Kereszturi, thirtieth collector of Sassin (later Sasvár in Nyitra county) would like to arrest the people of Tolna. MOL MKA index books of Expeditiones camerales (hereinafter Ecm) Tomus 632 (until 1590 the preserved, often scanty, documents can be searched back on the basis of their date).

³¹“Koppány megrohanása 1587 [The Attack on Koppány in 1587],” *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 10 (1897) 632–634 and Sándor Takáts, “A török portya és a magyar portya [The Ottoman Raid and the Hungarian Raid],” in *Idem, Rajzok*, I. 357.

³²Takáts, “Berenhidai Huszár,” 315.

also realised that he had better handle the ransom cases as the private business of the captives. In support of the *bey*s, he occasionally mentioned that they had only risen to such high positions due to the grace of the sultan, otherwise they had no “inheritance” whatsoever,³³ but he categorically denied paying for them.³⁴ The government in Vienna also learnt from it, only those people did not have the chance to do so who got involved in these cases without having to do anything with them, those who could not gain anything but could lose a lot: the merchants of the market towns who were forced into providing guarantee. Though they also realized the dangers, they were not able to draw the conclusions from them for they were at the mercy of both sides: the ones they undertook the guarantee for and the ones they guaranteed the payment of the ransom to.

The lesson the court in Vienna learnt cost once again the merchants of the territory under Ottoman rule a lot. When the question of the release of the newly captured *bey*s emerged, the problem of Ali *bey*'s ransom was also raised again. Quite understandably, as the new ransoms needed new sureties, and there was not a wide choice of them. It could be rightly feared that the Ottomans would allocate the same towns as guarantors and as a result Harrach could say good-bye to the rest of Ali's ransom. Therefore, during the negotiations on the new captives' discharge they assessed that Ali owed them about 15,000 florins.³⁵ From then on no mention was made of Ali *bey*'s ransom in the talks of the pashas of Buda and the Hungarian court officials.

Still, it would be a too optimistic conclusion to claim that the *bey* paid all his debts or the merchants of the market towns were pitied at last. Correspondence might have come to an end – at least at the highest level, though as we will see later on, it does not apply to the Hungarian Chamber – but the harassment of the merchants did not.³⁶ On the con-

³³Takáts – Eckhart – Szekefü, *op. cit.*, 487: No. 416 (June 6, 1589).

³⁴*Ibid.*, 424: No. 376 (April 24, 1588, from Sinan to Pálffy) and Jedlicska, *op. cit.*, 342: No. 542 (October 19, 1588, from Archduke Ernest to King Rudolf).

³⁵Jedlicska, *op. cit.*, 342: No. 542 (October 19, 1588, from Archduke Ernest to King Rudolf); in the publication only the term “*bey* of Koppány” is written, so it is difficult to decide whether it is about Ali captured in 1583 or the *bey* captivated in 1587.

³⁶On July 18, 1588, the Hungarian Chamber instructed the thirtieth collectors of Szempe, Galgóc, Vágújhely, Trencsén, Léva, Puchó, and Zsolna to hold up the guarantors and their merchandise; the instruction of the same office sent to Márton Thury, com-

trary, it seems that a period of tribulations had just set in. In October 1588, János Tábor, a merchant from Ráckeve, sent a letter of complaint to Archduke Ferdinand in which he presented the injuries he had suffered during his journey. He was entering the customs office of Ónod to pay the duty after his goods (15 kg of pepper, 58 foot rags for Janissaries, two rolls of “zelenek zel” [?], silk braid worth 4 florins). When, however, he dictated his residence to the official, the customs officer told him that “you are arrested, brother, with all your goods on the will of the Chamber, because we have been ordered to hold the people of Ráckeve, Nagykörös, Cegléd, Nagymaros, and Tolna with all their goods.” In vain did he say that he did not want to return to Ráckeve, that he had served others since his childhood, that he had no inheritance and relations in Ráckeve and he had started the “kadassak” (trade in wares of small value),³⁷ he was not set free.³⁸ The list of towns, the merchants of which had to be held up by the order of the Chamber includes the long tormented and threatened guarantors of Ali *bey*, though Vác, due to the forgetfulness of the letter writing merchant, was missing from it. Apparently, it was not only János Tábor who was obstructed on the basis of these instructions. The order cannot have been too old as, hearing about the first few cases, the people involved stayed away from the customs houses or tried to avoid trouble by concealing their addresses.³⁹

Upon receiving news about the repeated impediments, the well-to-do countrymen from the territories under Ottoman rule became petrified by the simple mentioning of the word “guarantor”. This fear can be detected even in the letters of the Ottomans. In January 1589, *bölükbaşı* Mustafa asked János Trombitás, the steward-judge of Miklós Pálffy in Komárom, to release a certain Ottoman prisoner, Ahmed, for 40 days in return for

mander of Palota to confiscate the goods and money of the people of Nagymaros might have been in connection with this, too; MOL MKA ECm Tomus 633.

³⁷About this trade, see Sándor Takáts, “A nyilas és kádas kalmárok [Peddlers and Petty Traders],” *Magyar Gazdaságtörténeti Szemle* 12 (1905) 380–381.

³⁸The letter was published by Sándor Eckhardt in *Magyar Nyelv* 54 (1953) 499–500.

³⁹It may be a sign of the ineffectiveness of the action that on March 2, 1589, the Hungarian Chamber ordered the thirtieth collector of Illava and Nagyszombat and those listed in note 36 *de arrestandis rebus et personis fideiussorum begii Coppaniensis ex captivitate ad obligationem ipsorum dimissi*. It might be a consequence of this that on June 21, 1589, the Hungarian Chamber corresponded with Archduke Ernest *de arestatione et vexationibus negotiatorum boarium ex Turcica ditione*; MOL MKA ECm Tomus 634; see also August 8, 1589 (from the Hungarian Chamber to Erasmus Braun).

his letter of safe conduct. Being not confident, however, that his word and letter were sufficient enough, he sent some people from the area under Ottoman rule to accompany them. He himself wrote that the people he sent were really afraid of “falling” into having to stand surety. Their fears were not groundless for he sent them with exactly this purpose.⁴⁰ This emerging anxiety might explain the phenomenon that the customs accounts of Érsekújvár–Jatópuszta in 1586–1588 recorded only a few merchants coming from the guarantor towns,⁴¹ though they had to cross this place to reach the northern and north-western customs stations, where the Hungarian Chamber hoped to damage them.⁴²

The case of Ali’s ransom continued in 1591, too. At the customs stations through which the Hungarian foreign trade towards the West proceeded, the harassment of the merchants coming from the guarantor market towns resumed again. From now on these merchants seemed to be dealt with separately by the Chamber of Pozsony. On May 29, the thirtieth collectors of Galgóc, Nagyszombat, and Vágújhely were sent the instruction to arrest the traders of Tolna and Ráckeve and take their goods.⁴³ (Apparently, they hoped to promote the solution of the ransom case by restricting the free movement of the merchants of Tolna, especially that of Bálint Mészáros.) Naturally, later on the others were also affected: on November 28, the council of Nagymaros submitted a petition in order to obtain the release of the burghers of Nagymaros, Benedek Dragulya and Máté Szöcs, arrested in Komárom owing to the ransom of Ali bey of Koppány (*ob fideiussionem Coppaniensis begii*).⁴⁴

At the same time (on November 10) the burghers of Ráckeve presented the awful events that had happened to them in a long letter. The peril was brought on them by another, even more complicated ransom

⁴⁰Jedlicska, *op. cit.*, 352–353: No. 563 (January 13, 1589).

⁴¹Gyula Kocsis, “Az érsekújvári hídvámjegyzék (Adatok a 16. század végi élőállat kivitelről) [The Bridge-Toll Records of Érsekújvár (Data on the Livestock Export in the Late 16th Century)],” *Bács-Kiskun megye múltjából* 12 (1993) 287–359. Traders’ list from 1586: No. 380 (from Vác), carters’ list: Nos. 11, 12, 14, 15 (from Nagykőrös), 3 and 17 (from Ráckeve), traders’ list of 1587–88: Nos. 296 (from Ráckeve), 373 (from Cegléd), carters’ list: Nos. 14, 75 (from Vác), 66 (from Tolna), and 36 (from Nagykőrös). Unfortunately, we do not have similar lists concerning this place from other years.

⁴²See also the list of border customs stations that were ordered to damage the guarantors.

⁴³MOL MKA ECm Tomus 636. No. 107.

⁴⁴MOL MKA ECm Tomus 636. No. 44.

case. Hungarian soldiers from Veszprém raided the town,⁴⁵ and “in return for all those Ottoman thirtieth collectors, *kadis*, *hocas*, and some boot-makers who live here they captured six leading Christian persons and wanted to kill them because they did not want to become bailsmen for them (i.e. the Ottomans of Ráckeve).” This means that in the opinion of the offended the attack occurred so that the people of Ráckeve could be compelled to pay some tax or ransom money for the Ottomans living among them. It is worth having a closer look at this case. Ráckeve is situated only 30 km south of Buda, the centre of Ottoman dominion in Hungary. The town on the Csepel Island was however not only defended by the vicinity of the capital and the river Danube but it was also protected by Ottoman palisades on the right bank of the river. Among the towns without an Ottoman garrison it must have belonged to the most sheltered places. Apart from its size and significance, this explains why the Ottomans had a *kadi* in it⁴⁶ and why some Ottoman craftsmen had settled there. In 1591, the reason why the people of Ráckeve had to pay was not that they were captured by the soldiers of the Hungarian border fortresses but because they could have been captured, simply because they had dared to settle down in an occupied town...

Needless to say, the people of Ráckeve had to pay again (“as we have seen the dead bodies of our Christian brethren lying in the streets”). With

⁴⁵The petition does not reveal which border fortress the raiders belonged to but it mentions that the attack happened with the knowledge and approval of “captain Ferrando”, who must have been Fernando Samaria de Specia Casa, alias Ferrando de Zamora. Ferrando was the captain-general of Érsekújvár in the 1580s. He handed over the captainship of Érsekújvár to Pálffy in 1589 (Jedlicska, *op. cit.*, 390: No. 641. October 4, 1589, from Samaria to Pálffy). In 1590 he was in his new post, Veszprém (Gustav Bayerle, *Ottoman Diplomacy in Hungary. Letters from Pashas of Buda, 1590–1593*. [Indiana University Publications. Uralic and Altaic Series, 101.] Bloomington, 1972, 76: No. 34; December 4, 1590, from Sinan pasha to Archduke Matthias), where he stayed until 1593, when the Ottomans besieged the castle and Ferrando, together with other officers, was captured by the Ottomans in a sortie (Gusztáv Gömöri, “Veszprém és Várpalota eleste 1593-ban [The Fall of Veszprém and Várpalota in 1593],” *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 8 (1895) 254; cf. Erdélyi, *op. cit.*, 103–109). Apparently, in 1591 he could only order the soldiers of Veszprém to attack Ráckeve.

⁴⁶*Kadis* usually resided in places where Ottoman troops were stationed, so that their defence was ensured. According to this letter, *kadi* was appointed even to Ráckeve, though the sources do not mention Ottoman soldiers there. Klára Hegyi, *Török berendezkedés Magyarországon [Ottoman Rule in Hungary]*. (História Könyvtár. Monográfiák, 7.) Budapest, 1995, 131–138.

some exaggeration they claimed this time with good reason that nothing like this had been committed against them by the Ottomans, “far from plundering the belongings of the emperor, not a single *sipahi* would dare to beat the serf of another *sipahi*”, let alone the serfs of the sultan; Hungarians did not care that they were paying tax to the Hungarians, too, and that they were the serfs of the Chamber, that is of the Court.

Though the intentions of the border fortress soldiers raiding Ráckeve are not quite clear, it may be assumed that the reason for the attack must have lain in the fact that the guarantors of the market towns were not willing to pay the rest of Ali *bey*'s ransom as late as 1591. The postscript of the letter refers to this connection: “We do not dare to trade anywhere because of Hadım Ali *bey*. Even now one of our fellow citizens is being kept in Komárom and another one has been detained there for the whole summer. And now Sir István again wrote a letter to us from Komárom that if we do not satisfy his majesty with taking the guarantee, he will send troops against our town.”⁴⁷

Though, with reference to the decrease in the income from the customs duties, the Hungarian Chamber asked the governor, Archduke Ernest,⁴⁸ to lift the ban due to Ali's debt on the people of Ráckeve and Tolna⁴⁹ on February 10, and on the people of Cegléd on October 17, 1592, the case of Ali *bey*'s ransom dragging for more than ten years practically came to an end as early as in late 1591. To be more precise it became settled by either some agreement unknown to us or a sudden event (it may have been the death of Ali *bey*).⁵⁰ The basis of our supposition is that the councils of Cegléd, Ráckeve, Nagykőrös, Nagymaros, Tolna, and Vác did not beg the Chamber to release the arrested citizens in 1592 any more

⁴⁷MOL MKA Városi és falusi pecséttel elátott levelek (cf. note 9). Pest county. Ráckeve. November 20, 1591. From Ráckeve to the Hungarian Chamber). The document was published by Ferenc Szakály in his *Mezőváros és reformáció (Tanulmányok a korai magyar polgárosodás történetéhez)* [Market Town and Reformation. Studies in the Early Hungarian Burgher Development]. (Humanizmus és reformáció, 23.) Budapest, 1995, 166–168; cf. 169–170.

⁴⁸MOL MKA ECm Tomus 637. No. 17 (from the Hungarian Chamber to Archduke Ernest).

⁴⁹*De civibus Tolnensibus, quod ... a fideiussione pro Hadon Ali Bekg eliberari petant*; MOL MKA ECm Tomus 637, No. 15 (from the Hungarian Chamber to Archduke Ernest); *ibidem adiectum de Raczkeöuiensibus*; *ibid.*

⁵⁰The name Ali was such a common one even with the Hadım (eunuch) adjective not mentioned previously that it is impossible to follow his fate.

but to provide some protection against the private landowners and thirtieth collectors.

The quick recovery of the connections between the people of Tolna – mainly those of Bálint Mészáros – with Vienna is especially conspicuous (which could occur because these connections were not completely cut during the troublesome years either; obviously the citizens of a market town not compelled to undertake guarantee acted as mediators). In 1592 we can also see the impediment of his activity as it was not customary to involve the government organisations in business. János Kürtösy confronted with the merchant “prince” of Vienna himself, Lazarus Henckel, due to his unsettled debt.⁵¹ The goods of Bálint Mészáros were at this time confiscated by the *Landgraf* of Vienna in connection with a deal related to Henckel, too,⁵² and János Somogyi became indebted to Antal Muskan from Vienna.⁵³ It can be added that Miklós Zalai was in relationship with merchants of Pápa.⁵⁴ The market town itself, together with the neighbouring villages belonging to the Bishopric of Vác, asked for the reduction of the thirtieth imposed on their exported wine.⁵⁵ The people of Ráckeve also got to Vienna, as they had some accounts to be settled with Johann Roznauer and others.⁵⁶ They visited Pozsony, too.⁵⁷ At the same time the former guarantor towns expected and received free passes from Pozsony,⁵⁸ promises to defend them against the border

⁵¹Arrested: MOL MKA ECm Tomus 637. No. 56 (May 2, 1592, from the Hungarian Chamber to Tolna).

⁵²He was summoned to appear in the Hungarian Chamber then he was sent to Vienna: MOL MKA ECm Tomus 637. No. 55 (June 16, 1592, from the Hungarian Chamber to Henckel), No. 74 (from the Hungarian Chamber to Henckel); about the confiscation of the money: No. 95 (July 30, from the Hungarian Chamber to Court Chamber).

⁵³MOL MKA ECm Tomus 637. No. 20. (March 20, 1592, from the Hungarian Chamber to Tolna).

⁵⁴MOL MKA ECm Tomus 637. Nos. 46 (June 10, 1592, from the Hungarian Chamber to Archduke Ernest) and No. 59 (from the Hungarian Chamber to Péter Huszár).

⁵⁵MOL MKA ECm Tomus 637. No. 81 (July 8, 1592, from the Hungarian Chamber to János Hundert).

⁵⁶About the transactions of György Kacsics with people from Vienna: MOL MKA ECm Tomus 637. Nos. 98 and 60 (May 27 and November 26, 1592, from the Hungarian Chamber to Ráckeve).

⁵⁷About their debate with a certain István Joó: Nos. 89 and 23 (October 1 and November 13, 1592, from the Hungarian Chamber to Ráckeve).

⁵⁸Free pass to Vác: No. 83 (July 27, 1592), and to Ráckeve: No. 64 (December 3, 1592).

fortress soldiers attacking the territories under Ottoman rule,⁵⁹ and petitioned (if they – like Ráckeve and Tolna at that time⁶⁰ – were administered by the Chamber) for tax reduction⁶¹ and other sorts of alleviation.⁶²

Returning back to the insignificant János Tábor who tried to defend himself against the ordeals by leaving his residence and with it the territory under Ottoman rule for good, it can be ascertained that several of the well-to-do merchants followed his example. So did scribes Péter, János, and Miklós, merchants from Pest and Ráckeve in 1591, leaving more than 100,000 florins worth of debts behind themselves.⁶³

After this we have no more data concerning Ali *bey*'s ransom case. On the basis of what we have said it is hardly doubtful that it did not end with paying off the debt. Presumably, Harrach had to be contented with the 15,000 florins and some presents he received at the end of 1584. If we consider that he only wrote some letters to urge the *Hofkriegsrat*, it was not bad business...

⁵⁹The people of Nagymaros asked for help against the soldiers of Léva who captured a Jew in their town: MOL MKA ECm Tomus 637. No. 55 (December 22, 1592, from the Hungarian Chamber to Archduke Ernest); the people of Ráckeve did not go into details when asking for defence: No. 15 (July 8, 1592, from the Hungarian Chamber to Ráckeve); the people of Tolna: No. 5 (November 19, 1592, from the Hungarian Chamber to Tolna).

⁶⁰It may be in connection with this that we can read about carpets sent by the two towns: MOL MKA ECm Tomus 637. Nos. 70 (March 3, 1592, from the Hungarian Chamber to Court Chamber) and 39 (December 7, 1592, from the Hungarian Chamber to Wolfgang Jörger). At the end of the year Count Ferdinand ab Hardegg tried to get hold the money due from them: No. 16 (from the Hungarian Chamber to Archduke Ernest).

⁶¹MOL MKA ECm Tomus 637. No. 80 (May 2, 1592, from the Hungarian Chamber to Tolna).

⁶²The intervention of the Hungarian Chamber with the prefect of Szentbenedek to procure that he should let the people of Nagymaros to transport wood: MOL MKA ECm Tomus 637. No. 33 (July 7, 1592).

⁶³Even if the amount of the debt obviously was not as high as 100,000 florins, the escaped people must have belonged to the wealthy merchants of the area under Ottoman rule, which is also shown by the vivid Ottoman–Hungarian exchange of letters concerning this matter: Bayerle, *op. cit.*, 92–93, No. 44. (June 29, 1591, from Sinan pasha to Archduke Ernest) and the manuscript collection of the Országos Széchényi Könyvtár: Fol. Hung. 431. 4–5. (October 3 and 5, 1591, from Sinan pasha to Pálffy, October 18, the draft of the answer); cf. Sándor Takáts, “Szofi Szinan basa,” in Idem, *A török hódoltság korából*. [The Era of Turkish Rule]. (Rajzok a török világból [Sketches from the Turkish World], IV.) s. I. et a., 245.

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The case of Ali *bey*'s ransom is not without parallel in the history of the Hungarian territories under Ottoman rule.⁶⁴ Though rarely was such a huge sum involved, and even less frequently did it occur that the Ottomans sacrificed the most important hubs of the occupied area, the involuntary undertaking of guarantee remained a daily burden imposed on the trade of the occupied territory.

Common sense (and public interest) scarcely allowed the total destruction of a guarantor or a town. However special the conditions of the occupied territory in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries may have been, the primary economic conditions could not be ignored by those who seemingly cared very little about them. The Ottomans could not afford to lose the most important tax-payers and the realistic view of the other side is reflected by Miklós Pálffy's remark according to which the obstruction of the town merchants would cause bigger damage than the amount of the ransom by losing the customs duties these traders would have paid. In spite of all this it is unnecessary to go into lengthy explanations to prove that this kind of non-economic constraint, the surplus "tax" caused immense damage in the trade of the occupied territories and to the merchants risking a lot to obtain a humble profit. It was only by trade that the people of these territories could get the huge amounts of money to be paid to both the Hungarian and Ottoman sides.

So we cannot talk about such kind of "knightly sacrifice" as the undertaking of guarantee was depicted by the great Hungarian historian Sándor Takáts. He wrote the following in connection with Ali *bey*: "In 1588, the court demanded an immense amount of money for the captive

⁶⁴From the letters of guarantee it is rarely obvious that the guarantee was undertaken under force. Nevertheless, on most occasions there is no doubt that it was the case. For the guarantee undertaken by the towns, see further Sándor Takáts, "Duskás Ferenc debreceni főbíró [Ferenc Duskás, Chief Judge of Debrecen]," in *Idem, A magyar múlt tarlójáról* [From the Hungarian Past]. s. l. et a., 68–69. Farkas Széll, *A nagybesenyői Bessenyei-család története* [The History of the Bessenyei Family from Nagybesenyő]. Budapest, 1890, 192–193 and Ferenc Szakály, "A Dél-Dunántúl külkereskedelmi útvonalai a XVI. század derekán [Export Trade Routes in Southern Transdanubia in the Middle of the 16th Century]," in *Somogy Megye Múltjából (Levéltári Évkönyv)*. IV. Ed. by József Kanyar, Kaposvár, 1973, 93–96.

bey of Koppány. The high-ranking people did not dare to support him because they thought it was impossible to pay such a high ransom. And when everybody left the poor *bey*, Bálint Mészáros arrived from Tolna and tried to bail the *bey* with the help of the people of Tolna.”⁶⁵ This mistake by Takáts can be only partly excused by the fact that he did not know all the documents because the real figures are apparent from the letters of the pashas of Buda published by himself. The real picture was quite different: “the poor *bey* of Koppány” who nobody wanted to help was in fact the real beneficiary of the system; the generous helpers, Tolna and the five other towns were the helpless victims of it.

When we pay tribute to those soldiers of the border fortresses who successfully met the demands of the defence against the Ottomans among inhuman conditions, when we recall their fights on the ramparts, their victorious clashes and their everyday lives, the plunders and the trials, we must not forget about those people who could become losers either the Ottomans or the Hungarians gained the upper hand in a battle. Without this grim picture the description of the life on the borders cannot be authentic, in the same way as if we only tried to emphasise this aspect of the issue. The conditions of the occupied territories were such that they made the situation of the people living there even more difficult and harsher. The market towns shared this fate so their prosperity so often mentioned in the scholarly literature cannot be taken for granted.

⁶⁵Takáts, “A török és a magyar raboskodás,” 284.

CATHOLIC MISSIONARIES AS TURKISH PRISONERS
IN OTTOMAN HUNGARY
IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

ISTVÁN GYÖRGY TÓTH

On May 14, 1635, the parish priest of Mohács, Don Simone Matkovich, who was reputedly a descendent of the medieval kings of Bosnia, wrote a letter from the Bosnian capital Sarajevo to the Rome-based Holy Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith (*Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*), a body of cardinals in charge of Catholic missions throughout the world. With great bitterness Matkovich informed the cardinals that the new governor of Buda, vizier Cafer pasha, had begun to persecute Catholics at the instigation of the Orthodox Patriarch of Constantinople, Kirill Lukarios. Rome should know that if the persecution were to continue, very soon there would be no Catholics left in Bosnia, Slavonia and the occupied territories of Hungary. The persecution of the Christians was on a scale not seen since Diocletian. The Mohács parish priest, as well as two of his companions (two other “Latin” i.e. Roman Catholic priests working in the occupied territories), had been imprisoned in Buda by vizier Cafer pasha. They had been taken prisoner in December 1634 outside their parish churches. From January 1 until February 2 they had been held captive at the castle of Buda, where they had suffered greatly from the January frosts. They had slept on snow and ice and their finger-nails had fallen off. Their hands, legs, and necks had been shackled with irons, and their meagre daily ration had been some weak broth with a little brown bread. They had been forced to watch the sufferings of their fellow Christian prisoners. Some prisoners had been impaled or beaten to death, while others had been tortured with pincers. Don Simone Matkovich had continued to be active in this gruesome prison. He had listened to the confessions of prisoners who had been sentenced to death, comforting them in order that they might die – as the missionaries said – “in good spirits”, i. e. as good Christians. In his letter, Don Simone assured the cardinals that he too had been resigned to die as a martyr. However, the Ottomans had been reluctant to slay the

three Catholic priests. Instead the priests had been beaten beneath the knee, in order that they might confess to having attempted to convert the whole province from the River Danube to Kanizsa, and to their being spies sent from Rome.¹

Following the intervention of Francesco Crasso, a physician from Ragusa (Dubrovnik) employed by the pasha of Buda, the half-dead priests had been released from the dungeons of Buda castle. The condition of their release was payment of ransom fees amounting to two thousand *thalers*. It was this enormous amount that Don Simone was now attempting to collect as a captive (*a guisa di un schiavo*) as he traversed the occupied territories. This was why he had come to Sarajevo, from where he wrote the letter. He was seeking to collect together the ransom sum from his relatives in the city and from the Turkish money-lenders. He wrote his shocking letter to Rome in the hope that mercy might be shown to him both by Pope Urban VIII (1623–1644) and by the Holy Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith, a body that regularly offered financial assistance to missionaries work in the occupied territories. “You do not know what is happening here,” wrote Don Simone Matkovich to the cardinals in a frank style that was very different from the baroque politeness and deference of normal correspondence in the period, “what persecution is taking place here; did even Diocletian behave in such a way?” He urged the Congregation to send money from Rome, so that the ransoms of the three priests and of the many other enslaved Catholics could be paid off.

Although the Holy Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith had often sent provisions amounting to 50–100 *scudos* (currency of the papal state) to the Catholic missionaries in the occupied territories, the ransom fees of Matkovich and his companions, which amounted to almost 2,000 *scudos*, represented a far greater sum. The Congregation had already had several serious disputes with Don Simone and was now unwilling to make such a large payment. Thus, Francesco Ingoli, the general secretary of the Holy Congregation, appealed to the imperial commander Count

¹APF SOCG Vol. 152. fols. 366–367v, 371. Eusebius Fermendžin, *Acta Bosnae potissimum ecclesiastica*. Zagrabiae, 1892, 423. For Catholic missionaries in Ottoman Hungary, see István György Tóth, *Relationes missionariorum de Hungaria et Transilvania 1627–1707*. Roma, Budapest, 1994. Idem, *Litterae missionariorum de Hungaria et Transilvania (1572–1717)*. I–IV. Roma, Budapest, 2002–2005.

Adolf Althan, a former Protestant who was now a zealous Catholic and a devoted supporter of Catholics living in the Turkish-occupied zone. Ingoli requested that Althan exert his influence upon the pasha of Buda in order that the two thousand *thalers* fine be cancelled or reduced. “Once again we are being dragged off to [the *kadi*] in Buda like dogs,” wrote Don Simone. “We are taking what is demanded of us and what we have borrowed from the Turks on usurious terms” – probably a significant ransom even if not the full sum of two thousand *thalers*. “If you send us something, then do it in time, and tell me what we should do, because we are unable to look after ourselves, and we are unable to flee” wrote the parish priest of Mohács at the end of his dramatic letter to the cardinals.²

The sufferings of Don Simone came to an end after a radical change in political direction that was so characteristic of the Ottoman Empire in the seventeenth century. Cafer pasha, “this new Nero,” was executed in Belgrade a few weeks after Don Simone wrote his letter, and his successor moved swiftly to bring an end to the persecution of the Catholics.

This short story is indicative of the fate of Catholic missionaries in the occupied territories of Hungary in the seventeenth century.

After the Council of Trent, Rome’s policy was to promote a revival of the Catholic church in Protestant, Orthodox, and pagan lands, as well as in the Catholic countries. The Pope sent missionaries to lands where Catholic hierarchies had never existed or where such hierarchies had been swept away by the Reformation or the advance of Islam. The task of the missionaries was to spread the Catholic faith. The territories of Hungary under Ottoman rule, where large numbers of Protestant and Eastern Orthodox Christians were living alongside the Muslims, rapidly became an important target area for Catholic missions. From 1622, these missions were brought under the direction of the Holy Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith, a body of cardinals that had recently been established by Pope Gregory XV (1621–1623) as the Vatican’s “Ministry of Missionary Affairs”. The documents preserved in the exceptionally valuable archives of the Congregation form the main basis of this study.³

²APF SOCG Vol. 160. fol. 308. Vol. 396. fol. 72. APF Lettere volgari Vol. 15. fol. 43v. Vol. 18. fol. 111v.

³On the history of this Holy Congregation: *Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide Memoria Rerum*. I/1. Ed. by Josef Metzler. Roma, 1971, 146–243.

The first reports of the missionaries sent to the Ottoman Empire aroused astonishment in Western Europe. The Turkish reputation was one of wild destruction, and yet these reports stated that the Ottoman authorities were not preventing entirely the work of the missionaries. The death sentence was reserved solely for missionaries who attempted to convert Muslims to the Christian faith. (For this very reason, such conversion attempts were rare.) Nevertheless, Catholic missionaries were subject to the arbitrary rule of the local Ottoman authorities; and they could easily find themselves in prison.

All types of Christian prisoners could be found in the Ottoman Empire – from destitute servants to members of the aristocracy. Obviously, the Ottoman soldiers were well aware that if a captive was held for ransom rather than sold at the slave market, the amount of the ransom fee would depend upon his wealth and status. The families of wealthy captives were clearly able to pay more for the release of their loved ones. Catholic missionaries – and priests in general – were especially attractive targets in the eyes of the Ottoman military, because their ransoms would be paid by the Catholic community as a whole rather than by distant family members. (Most of the Italian Franciscans serving in Hungary were from southern Italy, for example.) The fact that the church community was able and willing to pay, meant greater “purchasing power”. The other “advantage” of the missionaries was that they could be caught on home territory, and thus the Ottoman soldiers were freed from the burden of launching raids into the Ottoman–Hungarian frontier zone. Such military actions were not without their perils; the raiders could easily be killed or captured in battle. Meanwhile, the missionaries could be taken prisoner “on the spot”. The unarmed priests that were present in almost every village of Ottoman Hungary were no match for the Janissaries who were sent to detain them. A further advantage – from the perspective of the local pashas, *beys* or other military commander issuing an edict – was that ransom payers were also local. Rather than having to send off prisoners on long journeys to collect their ransoms, the Ottomans could simply summon the magistrates of the local Catholic villages.

Don Simone Matkovich’s despondent letter also mentions the “crimes” that were cited by the Turks as grounds for his detention. The authorities made similar charges against other missionaries, too. Given the overwhelming power of the Ottomans, charges could be made without there being any particular basis. Meanwhile the prison guards continued

to torture the captive priests by beating them below the knee according to good Turkish custom. The interrogators wanted to be told the whereabouts of the bishops and priests that had been sent by Rome to the occupied territories as spies. The charge of spying – one so often levelled against the missionaries by the Ottomans – had already been levelled against Don Simone in about 1620, when the Calvinists of Baranya county had brought a complaint against him, accusing him in front of the pasha of Buda of being a papal spy.⁴ This charge confused the spiritual and secular powers of the Pope. Sixteenth century popes had indeed regularly sent aid and soldiers to Hungary. For instance, in 1542 the prospective pope, Pius IV (1560–1565), had accompanied the papal support troops as they prepared their advance on Ottoman Buda.⁵ Several other popes (Pius V [1566–1572], Clement VIII [1592–1605], Innocent XI [1676–1689]) had helped to organise the Holy Leagues against the Turks. The missionaries, however, were far from being spies, even if some of them did send lengthy reports to Rome. The Holy Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith had clearly instructed the missionaries to avoid any involvement in political or military disputes. Even the Ottoman authorities – as we shall see – tended to regard these charges with scepticism. However, by claiming that the Catholic missionaries were papal agents sent by Rome with the task of spying or inciting a rebellion against the sultan, they were able to blackmail the Catholic communities.

In 1607, two Benedictine monks from Ragusa, Antonio Velislavi (abbot of the San Sergio and Bacco monastery in Albania)⁶ and his companion Ignatio Alegretti, were detained by the Ottomans and accused of being papal spies.⁷ It is worth noting that the charge against these two

⁴APF Miscellanea Diverse Vol. 22. fols. 180–182v, 183–185v.

⁵Ludwig von Pastor, *Geschichte der Paepste seit dem Ausgang des Mittelalters*. VII. Freiburg, 1957, 64.

⁶On the Albanian monastery: APF SC Albania Vol. 5. fol. 562r–v.

⁷The two monks came from the Benedictine monastery of the island Mljet (in Italian: Meleda) in the neighbourhood of Ragusa. Already in 1587 Pope Sixtus V (1585–1590) has sent three monks to Ottoman Hungary, among them the Benedictine monk Stephanus Bosnensis, who was called Melitensis, which can mean likewise “from Malta” or “from Mljet”; the latter is correct, as the visitation of the Mljet monastery by the papal visitor Gianfrancesco Sormano, bishop of Montefeltro proves: *Annales minorum seu trium ordinum a Sancto Francisco institutorum...* XXII. Ad Claras Aquas (Quaracchi), 1936, 462–463; no. LXXIII. István György Tóth, “Raguzai Bonifác, a hódoltság első pápai vizitátora (1581–1582) [Boniface of Ragusa, the First Papal Visitor of Ottoman Hungary (1581–

papal visitators, who were among the first missionaries to be sent to Ottoman Hungary in the seventeenth century, was based on a complaint to the Ottoman authorities by the Benedictines' own opponents within the Catholic church, the Franciscans. The Bosnian Franciscans were rightly anxious about the visitation of the two men from Ragusa. The visitators were of a different nationality and members of a different order, and they would obviously tell Rome that the Franciscans were living loose lives. The two Benedictine monks were finally freed by a group of merchants who were also from Ragusa. (Merchants of the town played a major role in the occupied territories.) The monks' ransoms were paid off, and the two men were spared death and allowed to leave.

Don Simone's letter also indicates the lack of any consequential policy towards the Catholics on the part of the Ottoman authorities. In general, they were tolerant of Catholic and other Christian denominations on their territory. Although the empire was based on an offensive form of Islamic ideology, in terms of religious forbearance it surpassed many a Christian European state. Calvinists living in the *vilayets* of Hungary enjoyed more freedom to practice their particular form of Christianity than Protestants living in Italy for example, and it was certainly less dangerous for a Catholic to celebrate mass in Belgrade than in London. While quick to clamp down on their own Muslim heretics, the Ottomans saw no danger in the various Christian denominations. Indeed, while the conversion of Muslims to Christianity was punishable by death, the religious law of Islam, the *sharia*, also provided for the protection of Christians of all denominations, as well as people of Jewish faith. Thus, the *zimmi* could practice their religion in relative freedom – subject to payment of a hefty poll tax.

The best relations with the Ottoman authorities were established by bishops of the Eastern Orthodox church. The Orthodox church enjoyed a considerable amount of autonomy within the Ottoman Empire. The head of the church was the Greek patriarch in Constantinople. The church paid very high taxes to the Ottoman state in return for its privileges. The Orthodox bishops themselves also paid large bribes to the authorities.

1582)],” *Történelmi Szemle* 39:3–4 (1997) 463. Augustinus Theiner, *Vetera monumenta Slavorum Meridionalium historiam illustrantia*. II. Zagreb, 1875, 330–336. Cf. Zdenko Zlatar, *Our Kingdom Come. The Counter-Reformation, the Republic of Dubrovnik and the Liberation of the Balkan Slavs*. Boulder, 1992, 165–166.

They in turn were reliant on the collection of taxes from members of other Christian denominations, including Catholics. Obviously, the Catholic priests strongly opposed the payment of taxes by their congregations to the “Greek” bishops, for this amounted to recognition of the authority of the Orthodox church. It was a matter of both prestige and money. The issue led to a direct confrontation between the Greek Orthodox bishops and the Catholic missionaries. Indeed, a good number of Catholic missionaries were imprisoned at the behest of Serbian or Romanian Orthodox bishops. Don Simone Matkovich alleged that his arrest had been requested by the patriarch of Constantinople, and this may well have been the case.

The fragile coexistence prevailing in the occupied territories of Hungary in the seventeenth century – a coexistence “chequered” by constant raids and kidnappings – also left its mark on the work of the missionaries.

After the Peace of Vienna (1606) the Habsburg kings and the sultans recognised that neither party was capable of expelling the other from the country. Each side accepted that it would rule just half of the country. Similarly, the Ottoman authorities at local level and their subject Christian populations were quite aware that their forced coexistence was likely to last for a long time. The effects of the crisis in Ottoman administration, which had become increasingly obvious since the end of the sixteenth century, were also felt in the occupied territories of Hungary. While the policy of the Ottomans towards the Christians was inconsequential, their arbitrary administrative rule was also accompanied by a high level of corruption. Vizier Cafer pasha, whose nomination according to Don Simone Matkovich was again linked to the intrigues of the Greek patriarch of Constantinople, began a merciless persecution of Catholics in the occupied territories. At the same time, according to reports written by the Jesuits and Franciscans, other Ottoman officials – pashas, *beys*, and *kadis* – were more sympathetic to the Catholic missionaries. Obviously, they too were quite willing to accept regular and substantial “gifts”.

The missionaries in the occupied territories were of various nationalities. There were Hungarian, German, Italian, Flemish, and Polish missionaries in the area; the Poles could understand Slovak, too. In addition, there were large numbers of Southern Slavs (Croatians, Bosnians, Slavonians, Dalmatians, and citizens of Ragusa), with the Bosnian Franciscans constituting the largest single sub-group. (Don Simone Matkovich was also a Bosnian. He had begun his life as a priest in a

Franciscan monastery. It was there that he had received his first tonsure. However, he had later fallen out with the Franciscans and he no longer wished to live as a monk. Thus he was one of a very small number of lay-priest missionaries in the occupied territories.) In seventeenth century Hungary, the Southern Slavs shared a common language with the local Ottoman élite, whose ranks had been filled with men of Southern Slav descent.⁸

The experiences of Don Simone Matkovich demonstrate this link. The parish priest of Mohács, who had been born in Ottoman territory, had a number of useful Ottoman contacts. His knowledge of Turkish was good,⁹ and he also knew something about Turkish customs. Don Simone visited Hasan, the *sancakbeyi* of Szendrő, at Újlak and offered him gifts. Hasan seems to have been a Southern Slav who had been taken by the Ottomans from his family in early age in lieu of child tax. He was still aware of his roots. The “Dalmatian” priests were able to communicate with the *sancakbeyi*; indeed, they had a long conversation with the softly spoken and grey-bearded *bey*, they came to the conclusion that he was missing his childhood Christian faith; he had been christened as a child in Dalmatia many years earlier. Hasan demonstrated his good will to Don Simone and his companions, speaking at first in Turkish and then in his mother language “Dalmatian” (i.e. in Croatian). Acting like “a father with his sons”, he warned them to be careful lest they should be taken prisoner and fall into the dangerous company of the Janissaries.¹⁰

Southern Slav contacts were of great assistance to other missionaries held prisoner in the occupied territories of Hungary. In 1651 another Bosnian, the Franciscan Matteo Benlich (Matej Benlič), became the missionary bishop of Ottoman Hungary with his seat in Belgrade.¹¹ He

⁸Cf. Pál Fodor, “Török és oszmán: az oszmán rabszolga-élit azonosságutatójáról [Turk and Ottoman. The Identity of the Ottoman Ruling Élite of Slave Origins],” *Történelmi Szemle* 37:4 (1995) 367–383.

⁹Fermendžin, *op. cit.*, 353, 357.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 363–366. Miroslav Vanino, “Kašičevo izvješće o Don Šimunu Matkoviću,” *Vrela i prinosi* (Sarajevo) 1 (1932) 80–99.

¹¹István György Tóth, “Egy bosnyák missziópüspök térítőútjai a hódoltságban (Matteo Benlich belgrádi püspök levelei Rómába, 1653–1673) [The Missionary Journeys of a Bosnian Missionary Bishop in Ottoman Hungary (Letters of Matteo Benlich, the Bishop of Belgrade, to Rome, 1653–1673),” *Levéltári Közlemények* 70:1–2 (1999) 107–142. On the Franciscan province in Bosnia, see Ivan Stražemanac, *Povijest franjevačke provincije*

served as bishop for over two decades, travelling indefatigably throughout the occupied territories. He was taken prisoner by the Ottomans on several occasions. The story of his detentions and releases – which can be reconstructed from his correspondence – is very similar to the tribulations of Don Simone Matkovich.

In December 1652, shortly after being nominated as bishop, Benlich visited all the parish churches in the region of Szerémség (Eastern Slavonia) as the missionary bishop of Belgrade. The Ottoman governors of the province accused him of being a spy from Zara (Zadar), who had come in order to collect information about the Ottoman Empire. He was taken by the Ottomans to Nempti, where he was imprisoned. His release came only after payment of a ransom of 80 *scudos*, an amount borrowed on usurious terms. Benlich's tribulations were far from over, for in the following year he resumed his visitation of the diocese. Passing through the occupied territories, he held confirmation services throughout the country.¹² On arrival in Temesvár, Benlich sought out the pasha in order to present the letter of protection that he had received from the governor of Buda. However, before he could do so the deputy (*kethüda*) of the pasha (*locotenente dell Passa*), raised the local Muslim population against him, claiming that Benlich had come from Venice with the task of inciting a rebellion against the sultan. The bishop was thus imprisoned by the local Ottoman authorities. The *kethüda* then pressed for his impalement as a spy and traitor; even some local Muslims began calling him a traitor. Benlich was locked up in the castle tower while the Turks began to sharpen their stakes in the courtyard below. Benlich was finally spared an agonising death after the intervention of his Southern Slav (Bosnian) acquaintances and the donations of the local Catholic community. Several

Bosne Srebrene. Zagreb, 1993, 134–144. Srećko M. Džaja, *Konfessionalität und Nationalität Bosniens und der Herzegowina. Voremanzipatorische Phase 1463–1804*. München, 1984, 152–163. Juraj Božilković, *Kritički ispit popisa bosanskih vikara i provincijala (1339–1735)*. Beograd, 1935, 60–71. Josip Buturac, *Katolička crkva u Slavoniji za turskoga vladanja*. Zagreb, 1970, 57–61. Dominik Mandić, *Franjevačka Bosna*. Rim (Roma), 1968, 164–165. Emanuel F. Hoško, “Djelovanje franjevaca Bosne Srebrene u Slavoniji, Srijemu, Ugarskoj i Transilvaniji tijekom XVI i XVII stoljeca,” in *Poviješno-teološki simpozij u povodu 500. obljetnice smrti bosanske kraljice Katarine*. (Analecta Croatica Christiana, 16.) Sarajevo, 1979, 112–114.

¹²Cf. Pál Fodor, “Das Wilajet von Temeschwar zur Zeit der osmanischen Eroberung,” *Südost-Forschungen* 55 (1996) 25–44.

distinguished Muslims, who were originally from Sarajevo, testified for Benlich. They verified that he had been born in Bosnia as a subject of the sultan. Meanwhile, Catholics in Temesvár collected 400 *scudos* on usurious terms for his release. Benlich, who had been branded a spy, a fomentor of rebellion and a traitor, was thus set free by the Ottoman authorities. He was able to resume his tour of the churches as if nothing had happened.¹³

The letters of Matkovich and Benlich – which underscore the less detailed accounts of many other missionaries – demonstrate the ways in which missionaries were imprisoned and then released.

According to this model, a missionary would be taken captive by one or another local Ottoman official and accused of spying for the Pope or some Christian state (in the case of Benlich, who had come from Zara, the foreign state mentioned was Venice, which was at war with the Porte over Crete). Missionaries would be accused of being outsiders and traitors who sought to incite rebellion. Local Catholics would then borrow large sums of money on usurious terms generally from local Muslim merchants, thus incurring heavy long term debts. The Catholics would then offer these sums to the Ottoman pashas or *beys*. Whereupon, instead of impaling the missionaries as spies, the Ottoman officials would show mercy and release the missionaries, who were then free to resume their work as priests. The Ottoman authorities were clearly aware that the missionaries were hardly likely to be spies or papal agents. This explains why the Turks were quite happy to let these men go once their ransom fees had been paid. Imprisonment of the missionaries was quite simply an additional method of securing income; the ransom fees supplemented the taxes that were also payable by the non-Muslim *reyas*.

In 1653–54, Matteo Benlich was released from Ottoman captivity on two occasions. Nevertheless, his sufferings were far from over. In 1664 – during the great Habsburg–Ottoman war – he set out once again on a visitation. However, his congregations forbade him from travelling to

¹³APF SOCG vol. 319. fols. 17 and 22v. APF SOCG Vol. 218. fol. 451r–v, APF SOCG Vol. 218. fol. 132, Vol. 218. fol. 2. Marko Jačov, *Le missioni cattoliche nei Balcani durante la guerra di Candia (1645–1669)*. I. Roma, 1992, 276–278, 619–670. Iván Borsa – István György Tóth, “Benlich Máté belgrádi püspök jelentése a török hódoltság katolikusairól 1651–1658 [The Report of the Bishop of Belgrade, Matteo Benlich on the Catholics of Ottoman Hungary 1651–1658],” *Levél-tári Közlemények* 60:1 (1989) 83–142.

Lippa or Temesvár. In such dangerous times, the Catholics obviously feared for the safety of their elderly bishop. Several letters sent to Rome also indicate that the Catholic communities were fearful that they would have to pay off the bishop's ransom once again, and that they would fall into even greater debt. Thus, Benlich visited the Belgrade area only, a region that was thought to be safe.

But, even here in the region around Belgrade his security was under threat. He was unable to celebrate masses and could only visit the parish priests at night because the *sancakbeyi* of Szendrő and his men were hunting for Catholic priests in the hope of securing good ransom fees. The bishop's vicar had already been taken captive by the Ottomans. The Muslims' charge against the vicar was that Catholic priests were praying for the victory of the Catholic troops and that money was being collected by church congregations for the Christian armies. (The first charge was most probably true; prayers surely had been said for a Christian victory – though not too openly. The other charge, however, had no basis, unless the Turks were thinking of the tax that was payable in the occupied territories to Christian landowners, who were often officers of the royal armed forces.) As Matteo Benlich wrote in his letter, these were dangerous claims that jeopardised the lives of many Catholics, including that of the bishop's vicar. It was feared that he would be impaled. Finally, the *bey* of Szendrő spared the vicar in return for a ransom. The impoverished Catholics borrowed the sum of money needed from the Turks (that is, from local Muslim merchants) on usurious terms.

As Benlich experienced on arrival in Temesvár, a letter of protection was sometimes of little value, given the chaotic state of Ottoman administration. With the assistance of a high-ranking eunuch at the Porte, who was also of Bosnian descent, Don Simone Matkovich had obtained a letter of protection from the sultan for himself and all Catholics living in the southern region as early as in 1608.¹⁴ As Don Simone froze in his icy cell in Buda with irons around his neck, he must have questioned the value of such a letter of protection, even one issued by the padishah, when faced with the wrath of a local Ottoman potentate.

There are even some recorded cases of disputes arising among the Ottomans over the missionaries. In 1638 the missionary and bishop's vicar Pietro Sabbatini told the Congregation of the Holy Propagation of

¹⁴Vanino, *op. cit.*, 80–99.

the Faith that with the support of the Turks the Bosnian Franciscans were constantly hounding lay priests; this had already cost 150 *scudos*. On Palm Sunday, ignoring a favourable judgement of the *kadı*, the *bey* of Szendrő's men drove Sabbatini and two other lay priests from their parish churches. One of the priests then had to pay a ransom of 100 *scudos*. According to Sabbatini, the Turkish soldiers were led by a Bosnian Franciscan from the Monastery of Gradovar. The monk had taken off his habit and dressed himself in bright red clothes. Carrying a gun on his back, he had led the Turkish troops on horseback to the house of the two missionaries. However, as Sabbatini also wrote, the Nempti Janissaries and the population of the whole village had risen up and rescued the priests from the hands of the *sancakbeyi*. A bloody battle had been avoided only because the *bey*'s men were very few in number.¹⁵ Meanwhile the local Catholic community had had to buy the good will of the local Janissaries; the Catholics knew that otherwise they faced payment of two ransoms for the lay priests.

In 1660, the Bosnian Franciscan missionary and missionary bishop of Belgrade Matteo Benlich (who, as we have seen, had been taken prisoner and threatened with impalement by the Turks on several occasions) fell into trouble because of a Franciscan who had been sold as a slave and then impaled in Pécs. Benlich's many enemies in the province accused him of having caused the miserable death of the Franciscan monk. For his part, Benlich argued that the wrath of the Turks had fallen upon the Franciscan because he was a common criminal.

The impaled Franciscan had lived in the Szerémség region. He had been disobeying his superiors for a period of two years before his death. On a visit to the area, Benlich had reprimanded the disobedient priest. He had told him that he must avoid the "company of thieves and bandits" and that he should live the life of monk and above all return the devotional objects which he had "borrowed" from a neighbouring parish church. While Benlich had then re-instated the reprimanded Franciscan at his parish church, he had also told him that failure to change his lifestyle would soon lead to an evil death. However, as Benlich wrote in his letter, the Franciscan had ignored this warning and had continued to seek out the company of thieves and bandits. Four months after Benlich's warning, the Turks had caught the Bosnian Franciscan and sold him as a

¹⁵APF SOCG Vol. 157. fol. 255.

slave in Pécs. The monk had then stated that he was a Hungarian *haiduck* (foot-soldier). However, many Turks and Christians in Pécs had recognised him as a Franciscan monk, and thus the Turks had impaled him for the false confession. In this case, the reason for enslavement and impalement was not that the accused was a priest or a missionary. It would seem obvious that the disobedient monk and friend of thieves and bandits had “borrowed” more than just a few objects from a neighbouring parish church. This was why he had been sentenced by the Muslim court to slavery. In his desperation he had then confessed to being a Hungarian *haiduck*, but this had only added to his plight. Perhaps he had hoped that as a Hungarian soldier he might be treated as a ransomable prisoner of war. But then the local people had recognised him; they knew that he was a monk and the parish priest of a nearby village. And thus the Turks had executed him.¹⁶

However fictional this story might seem, it is far from being unique. We know of a number of Franciscans in the occupied territories who became Muslims; one Franciscan even became a Janissary. The report of Alegretti and Velislavi, two Benedictine monks from Ragusa who visited the occupied territories in 1607, mentions two Bosnian Franciscan parish priests who “had become Turks”. These men had converted to Islam and had then been appointed by the Ottomans as “knights” entitled to *sipahi* grants.

In 1647, a lay Franciscan monk from Ragusa wrote a letter from Turkish Buda to the Holy Congregation. He signed his letter “Süleyman the Janissary, also known as Fra Vladislavo di Ragusa, layman of the order of Saint Francis”. The Franciscan-Janissary had been born in Ragusa, but had been driven out of the town by the Franciscans. With his habit removed, he had fled to Bosnia. In Bosnia he had dressed himself once again as a Franciscan, and had travelled from town to town as a healer. He had taken a wife, but had repudiated her and then married again. His second marriage had been held in front of the *kadi*. As one might expect, the Bosnian Franciscans had driven him out. He had then travelled to Belgrade, where the local Franciscans had banished him from their church and arranged for his ex-communication. In his despair, he had undergone circumcision and converted to Islam. He had taken the name of Süleyman the Janissary and had served in the Turkish army,

¹⁶APF SOCG Vol. 305. fols. 135–136v.

perhaps as an army surgeon. A feeling of satisfaction had filled him when his one-time persecutor in Bosnia, Fra Nicolo da Bagna Luca, was sentenced in Buda to be burnt alive at the stake (Fra Nicolo was freed only after payment of 600 *thalers*). Another Franciscan persecutor of Süleyman the Janissary had already been prepared by the Turks for impalement, but had also been set free in return for a sum of 1,000 *scudos*. Süleyman the Janissary – as he wrote in his letter – “wept night and day” in Buda, and yearned once again for the Christian faith. He asked that his sins be forgiven so that he might then desert to Hungary. However, the cardinals in Rome considered the transgressions of the monk to be so grave that his letter was unworthy of an answer.¹⁷

Another equally unlikely story is the biography of a missionary in Hungary who had come originally from Ragusa and who had also been taken prisoner by the Ottomans. In 1660, Giuseppe Maria Caracciolo of the Dominican order wrote a letter to Mario Alberizzi, secretary of the Holy Congregation. In his letter, he stated that he had served the Dominican order as a missionary in Hungary for many years; he had been sent to Hungary by a Dominican missionary from Ragusa. He had suffered greatly in Hungary on account of his Christian faith. He had been hounded above all by the Lutheran estate steward of the Catholic bishop of Veszprém. After his service in Hungary, he had been sent to the island of Scio, where he had converted many people. However, following one of his sermons, the Orthodox islanders had claimed that he was a Spanish spy and the *kapudan paşa* had sentenced him to serve as a galley-slave. He had then been redeemed from captivity by the bishop of Scio and a Catholic noble. Subsequently, he had gone to Constantinople, where he had preached in the Dominican church of Saint Peter in Pera and made efforts to free the Christian slaves. In 1648 he had tried to escape from Constantinople with two apostates (converts to Islam who had returned to the Catholic faith under the influence of his sermons). However, the Greeks had betrayed the three men, making charges against them with the *kadı* of Pera. The missionary and the two fugitives had then fled to an English ship, which had taken them to İzmir.¹⁸ The letter of Caracciolo indicates the extent to which the work of the church in Hungary was linked to Catholic missionary work throughout the known world. As a

¹⁷APF SOCG Vol. 94. fols. 103–104.

¹⁸APF SOCG Vol. 310. fol. 137.

province of the Ottoman Empire, the occupied territories were suitable terrain for missionaries of many different nationalities.

How much were Catholic missionaries worth in the seventeenth century, what was the “going rate” for missionaries held by the Ottomans as prisoners? The amounts demanded by them varied considerably. In 1649, Giovanni Desmanich, a Bosnian Franciscan who led missions in the Temesvár region (and who had already been released from captivity on another occasion after his two cousins paid his ransom), wrote in a letter to Rome that the governor of Temesvár and the *kadı* had imprisoned him on several occasions and that the condition of his release had been payment of a large ransom (*magno pretio*).¹⁹ In 1644, three other Franciscans had been released in the Temesvár region by the Ottomans in return for a ransom fee of sixteen thousand *akçe*, that is 160 *scudos*.²⁰ Circa 1650 two other Bosnian Franciscans – captives in the Temesvár region who had been tortured while bound to the stake – were released on payment of 180 *thalers*.²¹ Again in the same Temesvár region, the ransom fee for the missionary bishop Matteo Benlich was “estimated” in 1653 at 80 *scudos*,²² and in the following year at 400 *scudos*.²³

The Ottoman authorities in the Temesvár region demanded sums ranging from 80 to 400 *scudos* in return for the release of the missionaries. Payment of this sum on one occasion secured the release of the missionary bishop himself, while on another it led to the release of several Franciscans. However, in Buda, which lay at the centre of the Ottoman territories, far greater sums were demanded for the missionaries. Süleyman the Janissary, that is Vladislavo of Ragusa, referred to a ransom of 600 or 1,000 *scudos* or *thalers*, while in 1635 the pasha of Buda prescribed 2,000 *thalers* for Don Simone Matkovich and his two companions. The data demonstrate that the Ottoman pashas and *beys* demanded as much as they thought might possibly be squeezed out of the Catholic community.

Still, by the time of the great war of liberation at the end of the seventeenth century, the above horrors seemed a remote idyll. The re-

¹⁹APF SOCG Vol. 218. fol. 377, APF SOCG Vol. 218. fol. 69.

²⁰APF SOCG Vol. 127. fol. 12, APF SOCG Vol. 127. fols. 386 and 410v.

²¹APF SOCG Vol. 218. fol. 149.

²²APF SOCG Vol. 218. fol. 451r–v, APF SOCG Vol. 218. fol. 132.

²³APF SOCG Vol. 218. fol. 2r–v.

newal of conflict brought a rapid end to the “peaceful coexistence” that had characterised relations between the Ottoman authorities and the Catholic missionaries in the occupied areas ever since the conclusion of the Fifteen Years’ War. The Ottomans knew that their rule in Hungary was drawing to a close. Indeed, for a time it seemed that their empire might suffer a complete collapse in Europe. Thus, with unbridled anger, they began to turn on their “heathen” Christian populations. The wrath of the Ottomans was most severe in the Balkan territories, where in several places the local Christian populations had revolted against their rule in hope of liberation. Shocking accounts of archbishops hung in front of their own churches²⁴ and tales of monks impaled or beaten until they were dead or severely disabled, began to reach Rome and the Holy Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith. The Catholic missionaries in Ottoman Hungary were now in far greater danger than during the preceding decades of relative peace.²⁵

In 1695, Luca Natale, who was the vicar general of the bishop of Szerémség, wrote a letter to Rome. He told of his sufferings in southern Hungary, an area that had been a theatre of war for more than a decade. Natale had been taken prisoner by the Ottomans on several occasions and had now narrowly avoided capture by the Turks and the Tatars, who – on the very same day – had enslaved Don Giorgio Nitich, a former student at the college of the Holy Congregation. The Ottoman soldiers had passed Nitich on to the Grand Vizier, who had then dispatched him to the sultan in Constantinople. The wretched priest, whose clothes had been stolen from him, had been left almost naked. Owing to the damp winter cold and the irons around his legs and neck, Nitich never reached the Ottoman capital but died en route close to the town of Niš. The Ottomans severed the head from his corpse, for they needed to remove him from the neck iron that he had shared with four Christian soldiers. One of these four men later escaped and gave a full account of all that had happened to Don Giorgio Nitich. The Ottomans later also caught Luca Natale; they beat and imprisoned him. He was sentenced to impalement for having betrayed the Ottoman Empire, but was finally released (doubtless for a

²⁴APF SC Albania Vol. 5. fols. 457–458. Peter Bartl, *Quellen und Materialien zur albanischen Geschichte im 17. und 18. Jh.* München, 1979, 25.

²⁵APF SOCG Vol. 525. fols. 191 and 192v.

large ransom). He was told that if he was ever caught again, he would be burnt alive at the stake or condemned to the galleys for all time.²⁶

The war at the end of the century and the Ottoman collapse was accompanied by the unbridled persecution of the missionaries. At the same time, there was now some real hope that the Turks would indeed be expelled from Hungary and that the work of the missionaries could be dispensed with as Catholic religious life in the country gradually returned to normality. No one experienced this great change as intensely as Norbert Lázár, a young member of the observant Franciscan order in Hungary. The monk was serving in one of the most important Catholic institutions in the occupied territories, the Franciscan monastery at Gyöngyös, when, in 1686, the town was attacked by the Turks of Eger. The Ottoman soldiers sought additional supplies of food because they feared a Christian siege of Eger. They took several men hostage, including the Father Superior of Gyöngyös, Atanáz Móra, whom they threatened to impale unless the men of Gyöngyös delivered food supplies to Eger. The young Norbert Lázár offered to go with the Turks in place of the elderly Franciscan Father Superior, but he almost starved to death in captivity, because delivery of the food levy was delayed. In a letter to the Holy Congregation, Norbert Lázár described his anguish in the dungeons of the castle of Eger. He had been kept for six months in a dungeon deep underground, where the Turks had tortured him, beating him one hundred times on the soles of his feet. He had hardly received anything to eat and his hunger had been great. He had seen no bread, and had been fed dog meat, dried skin of ox, and wild grass. In his anguish he had even eaten the leather straps of his sandals. Nevertheless, the Franciscan had remained active throughout his detention. He had heard the confessions of thirty-five fellow Catholic prisoners, and had converted six heathens. The Ottomans had then sentenced Norbert Lázár to impalement, but had finally shown mercy as he was carrying the stake to the place of his execution. This brutal comedy was probably designed as a final warning. It served as a clear reminder to the people of Gyöngyös that payment of the food levy was well overdue. Assisted by one of his keepers, Norbert Lázár had managed to escape as the Christian armies began their siege of Eger. However, he had fallen from the high castle wall after his rope

²⁶APF SC Ungheria Transilvania Vol. 2. fols. 399–400v, APF SC Ungheria Transilvania Vol. 2. fols. 401–402v.

broke in two. Close to starvation and injured, he had slowly staggered to the Christian camp. He claimed that no food had passed his lips for twenty-five days; he was gradually nourished back to consciousness with a little broth every hour.

Five years later Norbert Lázár could watch – from the other side – as another former Ottoman stronghold was successfully laid under siege. In 1692, he was chaplain to the Christian troops who surrounded Nagyvárád and forced the surrender of the Ottoman garrison in the city.²⁷

After the expulsion of the Ottomans, Hungary was no longer a target area for Catholic missionary work. Nevertheless, some Catholic missionaries were still present in the Temesvár region, a region that remained in Ottoman hands until 1718. One such missionary was Lodovico da Ragusa, a Franciscan monk from the city state, the traditional centre of the Balkan missions. Defying an order from his superiors that he go to Bulgaria, Fra Lodovico stayed in Temesvár for several years. He ran a kind of “private mission” in the town. He not only baptised and preached to local townsfolk, but also redeemed a number of Christian slaves and reconverted deserters and other renegades to the Catholic faith. Fra Lodovico was the last working missionary in the occupied territories of Hungary.²⁸

²⁷SOCG Vol. 526. fols. 39r–v and 40v. János Karácsonyi, *Szent Ferenc rendjének története Magyarországon 1711-ig* [A History of the Franciscan Order in Hungary until 1711]. I. Budapest, 1922, 490–501.

²⁸APF SOCG Vol. 603. fols. 394–395v.

APPENDIX: THE SOURCES

I.

1607

*The report of two Benedictine monks from Ragusa,
Antonio Velislavi and Ignatio Alegretti, on Ottoman Hungary*

DOCUMENT: Biblioteca Casanatense, Roma, Ms 2672. No. 20. fols. 205–206v, contemporary copy.

EDITION: Eusebius Fermendžin, *Acta Bosnae potissimum ecclesiastica. Zagrabiae*, 1892, 390–391: No. MCCLXXIV.

(A copy of the report has survived in a *convolutum* volume containing various documents. Eusebius Fermendžin wrongly recorded the classification number of the volume in the Casanate Library, and stated that the document had been written in 1629–30, for which there is no evidence. Since the other documents in the volume, belonging to cardinal Scipio Borghese, nephew of Paul V (1605–1621), can be traced to 1610, it would seem quite certain that the copy of the report was made at the about same time. Fermendžin’s collection of records, which in other respects is excellent, published this important report with a great number of mistakes; the publication even fails to state that the two visitors had been sent by the Pope: “furno mandati dalla Santità di Nostro Signore”.)

Copia.

Illustrissimi et Reverendissimi Signori.

Nel 1607. Don Antonio Velislavi, abate di Santi Sergio e Bacco in Albania²⁹ et Don Ignatio Alegretti³⁰ furno mandati dalla Santità di Nostro Signore³¹ et dal Santo Offitio nel regno di Vngaria nelle provincie intorno al Danubio, di Possega,³² Lrieni³³ e Temisuari³⁴ et altri luoghi

²⁹APF SC Albania Vol. 5. fol. 562.

³⁰On the two Benedictine visitors from Ragusa, see *Erdélyi és hódoltsági jezsuita missziók 1609–1625* [Jesuit Missions in Ottoman Hungary and Transylvania]. Ed. by Mihály Balázs – Ádám Fricssy – László Lukács – István Monok. Szeged, 1990, 66–67, 183, 193.

³¹Pope Paul V.

³²Possega, Požega (Croatia).

³³Sic! but later written as Srienno, i.e. Sirmio.

³⁴Temesvár, Timișoara (Romania).

circonvicini, a visitare quelli religiosi e popoli cattolici con autorità di assolverli et procurarli di bisogni spirituali dalla Sede Apostolica, nelli quali luoghi si trovano molte migliaia di christiani et per la maggior parte fidelissimi e devotissimi et obedientissimi alli comandamenti apostolici, ma per lo più ignoranti delle cose pertinenti al christiano, et non haver chi loro insegn, li quali si confessanno et comunicano una volta l'anno, et molti non sanno né Pater Noster, né Ave Maria, né Credo. Vi sono molte donne streghe,³⁵ le quali imparano dalle Turche, ancorche siano in quella soggettione di Turchi, sono però constantissimi nella fede. Hanno costumi antichi di digiunare ogni venerdì et tutte le vigilie della Madona sino alli putti. In tutti li detti luoghi non vi è alcun monasterio di sorte nessuna, né vi son sacerdoti, se non pochi parocchiani preti, et alcuni fratri minori osservanti pure parocchiani, venuti dal regno di Bosna, li frati sono odiati per essere dissoluti, et per ciò desiderano più tosto preti, li detti frati non si volsero lasciar visitare, ma accusarono detti visitatori come spioni del Papa, quali visitatori furono per ciò presi da Turchi, et fatti prigioni, et co l'grande aiuto che hebbero da mercanti christiani, scamporno la vita. Dui di detti frati parrochiani // (fol. 205v) si sono fatti Turchi, uno in Samandria³⁶ nella provintia di Srienno,³⁷ et l'altro al Barcariccio³⁸ nella provincia di Possega per la libertà del vivere, li quali da Turchi sono stati fatti cavalieri. Li detti frati parrochiani danno ad intendere a quelli popoli d'haver maggior autorità di preti, et nelle feste solenni concedono indulgenze di 500 et 600 anni a chi vede la messa loro. Tanto li detti frati, quanto li preti assolvono delle casi tanto riservati al vescovo, quanto alla Sede Apostolica. Detti parrochiani sono persone ignoranti, quali non tengono sacerdotale, solo tengono il missale et un libretto da battezzare molto mal fatto. Adoperano l'oglio santo di tre e quattro anni per rispetto, che li bisogna mandarlo a pigliare da Ragusa³⁹ o Dalmatia, quali luoghi per essere 25 e 30 giornate lontani, costa molto la portatura.

La maggior parte delle chiese sono scoperte, tutte con mura vecchie e antiche, senza campane, senza altari et senza figure, non tengono fonti

³⁵Witches.

³⁶Szendrő, Smederevo (Serbia).

³⁷Sirmio, Szerémség, Srijem (East Slavonian region around Belgrade).

³⁸Probably Pakrác, Pakrac (Pozsega county; Croatia).

³⁹Dubrovnik.

battismali, né sacrarii. Battezzano li putti con l'acqua benedetta la Domenica, o vero la benedicono all'ora, li battezzano tutti per le case, et per le campagne, per non haver commodità delle chiese. Sono trenta anni e più che in quelli luoghi non vi è stata chresima per non esservi vescovo, né persona che habbia havuta tale autorità. Li parrochiani non tengono né libro, né nota di battesimo, né di matrimonii. Li calici et le patene sono di stagno e di rame, li corporali // (fol. 206) et paramenti tutti stracciati et sporchi. Il sacramento di estrema unzione non si usa, o per negligenza o per ignoranza di parrochiani. Il giovedì et venerdì santo non si dicono messe, né si ripone il santissimo sacramento, né fanno altre solennità eccetto in alcuni luoghi nel venerdì santo dicono la messa della croce o vero dello spiritro santo. Nella provincia di⁴⁰ Temisuar, dove è la maggior parte cattolici, non vi è nessun sacerdote et però vivono e muorono senza sacramenti, et li figliuoli senza battesimo. Nella provintia di Possega nel ducato Zerni⁴¹ vi è un arbore chiamato Lippa⁴² in un luogo deserto dove ogni prima domenica della luna nova concorre gran numero di Turchi et christiani con viti et candele et altre cose et il parrochiano ivi vicino per l'elemosine che vi raccoglie, vi dice la messa, et adorano quell'arbore basciandolo come fosse un corpo santo con dire che fa miracoli, et sana quelli, che fanno voto a detto albore, et alcuni ne sanano, et ad alcuni ritorna il male con progresso di tempo et a molti non li torna più, li detti disordini parte nascono per tirannie di Turchi, parte per ignoranza di rettori, ma per lo più perché non hanno vescovo, che gl'indirizzi qualche poco, onde la chiesa di Santo Spirito di Possega insieme con tutt' i popoli di quelle provintie hanno fatto procura in persona del detto abbate a procurare da Nostro Signore a darli per vescovo il detto Don Ignatio Alegretti, il quale è stato molte volte visitatore apostolico in quelle parti, et sono 20 // (fol. 206v) anni che sta al servizio di quell'anime senza nessuna provisione, quale è homo di 45 anni in circa, letterato, di vita buona et esemplare et molto amato, conosciuto et ben voluto da detti popoli e sin da Turchi, come appare per molte fedi della sua bontà, il che oltre che sarebbe di gran consolatione di quell'anime, risulta anco in utile della Sede Apostolica, poichè non vi sarebbe bisogno mandar così spesso

⁴⁰Deleted: Possega.

⁴¹In the possessions of the Zrínyi counts.

⁴²Linden-tree. He confused the Croatian word for linden-tree (*lipa*) with the name of the town Lippa (Lipova, Romania).

visitatori con pericolo della lor vita. Et anco sarà bene trattare con li signori di Ragusa, che con mezzo di loro imbasciadori et mercanti ottenghino dal Gran Turco⁴³ un privilegio al vescovo di poter essercitare il suo offitio et visitare quelle provincie senza travaglio et impedimento. Et questo è quanto riferisce alle Signorie Vostre Illustrissime per ordine di Nostro Signore. Quas Deus etc.

II.

In ca 1650, Bacău⁴⁴

*Letter of the Observant Franciscan Marco Bandini
to the Holy Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith
about the Turkish captivity of the Bosnian Franciscan missionaries*

DOCUMENT: APF SOCG Vol. 218. fol. 149; original with autograph signature. Another almost identical text: fol. 148.

Illustrissime et Reverendissime Domine, Domine et Patrone semper Colendissime.

Repetitis vicibus jam ad me litteras catholici Inferioris Hungariae ultra Danubium existentes ex episcopatu Chanadiensis⁴⁵ miserunt supplicantes, et unice rogantes, quatenus ego apud Sacram Congregationem ipsorum miserias et calamitates quas ab episcopis scismaticorum ob defectum proprii episcopi catholici patiuntur, exponerem, qui ab ipsis tot contributiones quibusdam privilegiis Turcarum imperatoris exigunt imo etiam ab ipsis personis ecclesiasticis et religiosis a quolibet ipsorum annuatim unum thallerum expetunt, et quod peius est sacramentorum administratio ipsis omnino prohibetur, nisi prius ipsorum consensus et approbatio requiratur. Hinc est etiam quod ante triennium duos nostros patres victos in Denta⁴⁶ et ad Versecz⁴⁷ ductos trabis imposuerunt, quos inde

⁴³The sultan.

⁴⁴Hungarian Bákó in Moldavia (Romania).

⁴⁵Csanád, Cenad (Romania).

⁴⁶Denta (Romania).

⁴⁷Versec, Vršac (Serbia).

reverendus pater Joannes Desmanich⁴⁸ praefectus 180 thalleris redimere debuit, quo tempore etiam Andream Ztipancich⁴⁹ Lippaensem⁵⁰ capellanum Tómsuarini⁵¹ teterrimo carceri manciparunt, ex quo post octiduum propria industria se 130 thalleris redemit. Has et alias calamitates evitare cupientes, supplicat apud Sacram Congregationem quatenus dignaretur ipsis de episcopo catholico, qui patriae notus linguae experts et ipsis gratus foret, providere. Penes quos catholicos ego quoque quantum potui apud Sacram Congregationem supplicavi, et supplicare non cesso, ut Sacra Congregatio dictos catholicos visis eorum calamitatibus et crebris expostulationibus dignetur eos consolari, ut eo melius cultus divinus exerceatur, et fides catholica promoveatur. Pro illo autem episcopatu si singulos quos nosco perpenderem, aptiorem neminem patre admodum reverendo Joanne Desmanich invenire possem, qui in dicto episcopatu bene practicus notus omnibus, et ab omnibus unice adamatus, quem etiam ipsi catholici omnes unanimi consensu et non alterum postulant et desiderant, mihique in litteris ipsum pro hoc officio commendantes specificatim nominant et rogant ut ipsum et non alium Sacrae Congregationi pro tali dignitate proponam, prouti etiam ipsorum voluntati et petitioni satisfacere cupines, proposui et specificavi. Cumque Illustrissima et Reverendissima Dominatio Vestra singulari zelo erga christifideles eis benigne patrocinando fertur, nihilque magis exoptet, quam ut fides catholica augeatur, modo in dicto episcopatu patrocinium Illustrissimae et Reverendissimae Dominationis Vestrae cum summa humilitate desideratur. Quorum ego partem tenens supplico ex parte eorundem, et ex mea quoque quantumcumque possum apud Illustrissimam et Reverendissimam Dominationem Vestram et post tot gratias in me collatas hanc singularissimam modo a Dominatione Vestra Illustrissima et Reverendissima efflagito, rogando ut solita sua benevolentia hactenus erga me demonstrata, etiam modo hanc meam petitionem amplecti velit, et dictum patrem Desmanich ad dictum officium episcopale juxta petita catholicorum promovere dignetur, pro quo officio scio ipsum esse habilem, et idoneum, ac in Domino contestor. Et quicquid in ipsum Dominatio Vestra Illustrissima et Reverendissima benevolentiae et gratiae

⁴⁸Giovanni Desmanich, Bosnian observant Franciscan, *praefectus missionis*.

⁴⁹Andrea Stipanchich, Bosnian observant Franciscan, missionary.

⁵⁰Lippa.

⁵¹Temesvár.

demonstraverit, id in meam propriam personam redundabit. Pro qua gratia in me demonstrata vita durante Illustrissimae et Reverendissimae Dominationi Vestrae inservire et regratificari conabor. Quam his brevibus felicissime valere cum deosulatione manuum et diutissime vivere pro incremento Sanctae Matris Ecclesiae cordicitus apprecor. Datum Baccouiae⁵² die ...⁵³

Illustrissimae et Reverendissimae Dominationis Vestrae

(servus)

Frater Marcus Bandinus archiepiscopus metropolita Marcianopolis etc.
m.p.

(fol. 160v) All' Illustrissimo et Reverendissimo Signor, Signor et Patronio Colendissimo monsignor Francesco Ingoli⁵⁴ segretario di Sacra Congregazione de Propaganda Fide in Collegio
Roma
L.S.

III.

November 28, 1696, Kecskemét

*Letter of the Observant Franciscan Norbert Lázár to the Holy
Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith about his Turkish captivity*

DOCUMENT: APF SOCG Vol. 526. fols. 39r–v + 40v, autograph original.

Eminentissimi ac Illustrissimi Principes Domini Domini et Patroni Colendissimi.

Non quod ego vellem in hoc mundo mercedem accipere, prae meis fatigiis et charitatis operibus, cum temporalia nulla sint et omnia

⁵²Bákó.

⁵³The place of the date was left empty on both manuscripts.

⁵⁴Francesco Ingoli, the first secretary of the Holy Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith from 1622 to 1649.

transitoria, sed in coelis ego cepi nidificare mihi ab initio introitus ad Sacram religionem Seraphicam⁵⁵ et ibidem reponere thesoros praemiorum vitae aeternae. Iterim video in dies quod et hic temporaliter degentibus in alma provincia nostra Salvatoriana⁵⁶ tribuatur aliquid solatii in via defessis vero usque ad suspirium ultimum lassatis. Quod connivetur secundum proportionem laborum meorum. Ego quoque me humilliter insinuo tanquam ultimus inter alios, quod fraternam charitatem non tantum verbis, sed etiam opere cum dispendio vitae meae exercuerim in captivitate Turcica Agriensi,⁵⁷ ubi fuerim detentus in profundissimo subterraneo carcere per cursum anni medii ibique jugo tyrannico crudeliter cruciatus et tractatus, accipiendo aliquot centenos baculos per plantas cum amissione unguium, famem enormem passus, ubi nec mentio panis erat, sed carnibus caninis, pellibus bovinis antea exsiccatis per modum bitumine coctis et herbis diversi generis coctis tractatus, ubi ex concaptivis meis catholicis 35 sacramentaliter absolvi in subterraneo carcere et sex personas hereticas e via veritatis deviantes ad fidem christianam perduxi. Insuper etiam militem christianum ex Olnadiensi⁵⁸ praesidio captum abductum (professione Caluinistam) per monita salutis verae Matris Ecclesiae reconciliasse eumque juvante gratia Spiritus Sancti vere ut humano modo colimari poterat contritum et confessum in manibus meis animam Deo reddisse. Qui ad initium piarum monitionum et catholicarum instructionum mearum ausus fuerat dicere haec verba sequentia: Si scirem quod Deus sit papista, ad huc non vellem esse papista. Ad ultimum fui adjudicatus palo, ubi jam actu in humeris meis palum ad locum supplicii deportassem, ista videndo plurimi Turcarum misericordia moti eliberarunt a morte. Dum autem per miliciam caesarem fuisset obsessa praenominata arx Agriensis tandem per Turcam dimissus ex altissimo propugnaculo rupto fune praeceps cecidi et sic evasi manus eorum in nomine Domini. Quam probam ego non tentassem, nisi fames maxima non regnasset super nos, possum fateri salva conscientia (fol. 39v) sacerdotali coram Suis Eminentissimis Illustrissimisque Principibus⁵⁹ quod per viginti quinque dies neque panis neque herba aut

⁵⁵The Franciscan order.

⁵⁶The observant Franciscan province "Sanctissimus Salvator" in Hungary.

⁵⁷Eger.

⁵⁸Ónod.

⁵⁹The cardinals of the Holy Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith.

gramen neque coreum aut pellis aliqua uno verbo comestibile quid in ore meo habui.

Idecirco humillime rogandum duxi Suas eminentias ac Illustrissimas Dominationes Vestras, per vulnera Jesu Christi Nazareni propaganda fide ac salute animarum a Congregatione Sacra puram et expressam pro missionariatu facultatem, obtinere valeam, fungique officio illo, ut in vinea Domini radices pestiferas eradicare arbores steriles fructuosas facere, spinas et tribulos verbum divinum suffocantes igne Evangelii comburare possim ac valeam. Pro sua clementiali gratia Ter Optimus Maximus corona immarescibili coronet aeterna Suas Eminentias ac Illustrissimas Dominationes Vestras.

Ejusdemque Eminentiarum ac Illustrissimarum Dominationum
humillimus servus et subditus obediens
Frater Norbertus Lazar ordinis minorum Sancti Francisci reformatae
provinciae in Hungariae Sanctissimi Salvatoris benignum responsum
expectaturus

Datum in conventu Kecskemetiensi,⁶⁰ die 28. Novembris 1696.

(fol. 40v) Ad Eminentissimos ac Illustrissimos Principes in Congregatione Sacra de Propaganda Fide

humillimum memoriale

introscriptus m.p.

Vngheria

A monsignor segretario di Propaganda Fide.

(summarium)

Die 8. Januarii 1697.

Audiatur eminentissimus Kollonitz.⁶¹ 14.

Secretarius.

⁶⁰Kecskemét.

⁶¹Leopold Kollonich (1631–1707), cardinal, archbishop of Esztergom from 1695 to 1707.

A MUSLIM CAPTIVE'S VICISSITUDES
IN OTTOMAN HUNGARY
(MID-SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)

ZSUZSANNA J. ÚJVÁRY

“Captives from both sides should be returned and persons (i.e. captives) of equal value should be exchanged, so that the demand for a ransom by the captives’ masters on both sides should be satisfied; and those who have settled with their masters in the business of the ransom should pay it; and those who were taken captive in times of peace should be released without any payment,” reads Article 7 of the Treaty of Zsitvatorok.¹ In fact, this agreement, together with the Treaty of Vienna,² formed the basis for policy in seventeenth-century Hungary, remaining the official point of departure in Ottoman–Habsburg relations until 1664. It served as the basis of the negotiations in Vienna in 1615–16 and in Komárom in 1618 concerning the 158 villages whose fate was left unsettled in the Treaty of Zsitvatorok and subsequently.³ The peace treaty was renewed by Ferdinand II (1619–1637) and Murad IV (1623–1640) on May 28, 1625 in Gyarmat, and then on September 13, 1627 in Szőny, this time for twenty-five years.⁴ In 1629, there were again negotiations in Komárom,

¹This was concluded at the mouth of the river Zsitva by the representatives of Emperor Rudolf II and Sultan Ahmed I (1603–1617) on November 11, 1606. Its Hungarian text was published in *Magyar történelmi szöveggyűjtemény 1526–1790* [A Collection of Hungarian Historical Texts]. I. Ed. by István Sinkovics. Budapest, 1968, 367–371. For more detail about the negotiations and the agreement, see Karl Nehring, “Magyarország és a zsitvatoroki szerződés (1605–1609) [Hungary and the Treaty of Zsitvatorok, 1605–1609],” *Századok* 120:1 (1986) 3–50.

²Signed on June 23, 1606, this closed István Bocskai’s war of independence with the Habsburg monarch.

³Nehring, *op. cit.*, 36; cf. Sándor Kolosvári – Kelemen Óvári, *Corpus Juris Hungarici / Magyar Törvénytár. 1608–1657. évi törvénycikkek* [Statutes of the Years 1608–1657]. Budapest, 1900, 115: 1613:35, 127: 1618:2–3.

⁴Cf. Antal Gévyay, *Az 1625. évi gyarmati békekötés cikkelyei magyarul, törökül és deákul* [The Articles of the 1625 Treaty of Gyarmat in Hungarian, Turkish and Latin]. Vienna, 1837 and Idem, *Az 1627. évi szőnyi béke cikkelyei magyarul, törökül és deákul*

and on February 19, 1642 the Treaty of Szőny, concluded in 1627 but upset by military operations by both sides, was prolonged by the envoys of Ferdinand III and İbrahim I (1640–1648) for a further twenty years.

In 1646, then, a truce was in existence between the Ottomans and the Habsburgs. Its terms prohibited pillaging, the laying waste of territory, and all other violations of the peace, including, of course, raids aimed at the taking of captives.⁵ As captain-general of Transdanubia,⁶ Ádám Batthyány I was one of those responsible for preserving “the Holy Peace”.

Despite this, the Ottomans seized more and more villages in the border areas, and even inside officially unoccupied territory of the Hungarian Kingdom (where *sipahis* were often granted whole villages by the treasury as *timar*-holdings), or they else forced increases in the taxes of villages subjugated earlier. In response, the Hungarian borderland forces struck back and even re-annexed some settlements.

Every responsible Hungarian politician and soldier in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries acknowledged the destructive nature of the Ottoman peace. In 1641, Miklós Esterházy, who served as Palatine (i.e. viceroy) from 1625 until 1645, summed this mood as follows: “Besides, even in times of peace (if it is to be called peace), the Turks have their own well-trying ways of launching attacks on Hungarians and on the Kingdom of Hungary without resorting to open warfare. Firstly, they do so by means of theft, since, like the villainous thieves they are, the Turks in the border areas abduct and plunder at will those Hungarians who leave their homes, especially children and the young, just as hungry

[The Articles of the 1627 Treaty of Szőny in Hungarian, Turkish and Latin]. Vienna, 1837.

⁵A new, pioneering study on the holding of, and trade in, captives in Hungary is János J. Varga, “Rabtartás és rabkereskedelem a 16–17. századi Batthyány-nagybirtokon [Keeping of and Trade in Captives on the Batthyány Estates in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries],” in *Unger Mátyás Emlékkönyv* [Festschrift for Mátyás Unger]. Ed. by E. Péter Kovács – János Kalmár – László V. Molnár. Budapest, 1991, 121–133. – For a comprehensive summary with an almost complete bibliography on the subject, see Géza Pálffy’s contribution to the present volume. See also the recent study by Hajnalka Tóth, “Török rabok Batthyány I. Ádám uradalmaiban [Turkish Captives on the Estates of Ádám Batthyány I],” *Aetas* 2002/1, 136–153.

⁶He obtained this office in 1633, with a temporary mandate at the time. András Koltai, “Egy magyar főrend pályafutása a császári udvarban. Batthyány Ádám (Bécs 1630–1659) [The Career of a Hungarian Aristocrat at the Imperial Court. Ádám Batthyány (Vienna 1630–1659)],” *Korall* 9 (2002) 67–68.

wolves carries off sheep. Secondly, on the slightest pretext they sally forth with flags and drums to make grave attacks upon the Kingdom, killing and cutting down anyone whom they meet and taking the hapless people away into a hard captivity. Thirdly, using various documents (i.e. letters), threats and similar forms of intimidation, they pillage the wretched people daily [and] enlarge their borders, ... thereby becoming richer while we become drained. Fourthly, there is the additional factor that the Turks are undoubtedly hostile.”⁷ In one of his letters of March 1641 to the *bey* of Koppány, who had complained about attacks by Hungarian soldiers, Ádám Batthyány I shed some appropriate light on the situation. He wrote: “We have learned to attack from those at Kanizsa,⁸ who never rest, even in occupied villages where valiant soldiers dwell. Even if the people of these villages pay their taxes, they are visited, taken away and released only after payment of a ransom. In this very year there have been a number of violations of the Holy Peace, violations that we have thus far tolerated peaceably. They (i.e. those at Kanizsa) spare nobody, they do not care about the Peace, and therefore whatever we have done we have learned from them. And if they do not halt their attacks, we shall show that our valiant soldiers are also fed on bread, since so far we have given no cause for commotion, but if this is what they are after, we, too, shall have to show our teeth.”⁹

During the necessary Ottoman–Hungarian coexistence of more than 150 years, and especially after the Treaty of Adrianople (1568) in which professional slave-traders were barred from the country, the custom of taking and trading captives gradually developed on both sides,¹⁰ although larger predatory expeditions were impeded by the long peace and by the system of border fortresses that grew up. In 1645, Ádám Batthyány wrote the following to the Christian captives in Kanizsa: “As you are treated as

⁷*Esterházy Miklós nádor a királyság oltalmazásáról és a török béke pusztító voltáról 1641-ből. Magyar passió 1608–1711. (Forrásgyűjtemény)* [Palatine Miklós Esterházy on the Protection of the Kingdom and on the Destructive Nature of the Turkish Peace in 1641. Hungary’s Ordeal 1608–1711. (A Collection of Sources)]. Ed. by Gábor Nagy. Debrecen, s. a., 207–209.

⁸The centre of a *vilayet* since 1600 and the main base for attacks on western Transdanubia and the Hereditary Provinces.

⁹MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. [Archives of the Batthyány family] P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok [Documents pertaining to the Turks] II. 249. cs. No. 11. Ádám Batthyány’s draft letter to the *bey* of Koppány. Németújvár, March 4, 1641.

¹⁰Cf. Pálffy, “Ransom Slavery,” 35 ff.

guarantee there, so we shall likewise treat our Turkish captives who are guarantee for other Turkish captives, who are now in Turkey and will not be sent back.”¹¹

Also, the treatment accorded to captives was tailored to that meted out by the other side. On December 30, 1645, and again on January 1, 1646, the Turkish captives in the Hungarian fortress at Szalónak wrote the following to their fellow-Turks in Kanizsa: “The Christian captives there (Kanizsa) have, as is complained of here, been deprived of their bread, and the mighty vizier will not let them continue begging as was their wont, on account of which they are almost famished to death. Likewise we ourselves, lying here in His Honour Count Ádám Batthyány’s prison, are deprived of our bread and commonly suffer from hunger. ... Up until now we have, with the exception of freedom of movement, had nothing prohibited us whereby a poor captive might have fed himself. Rather, we have been free, as we said earlier, to beg and to buy bread and meat, and were also given enough bread day by day.”¹² The writers of this letter implored their fellows to make the pasha of Kanizsa ease the life of the Christian captives because in this way their own lives would become easier, too. The governor of Kanizsa responded in a strange way: he immediately sent dried meat and other victuals to the Hungarian fortress. Captain-general Batthyány replied emphatically that the Turks could not hope to feed the captives from without, but rather should not starve the Christian captives they were holding in Kanizsa, Buda and elsewhere. In this case, said Batthyány, the Hungarians, too, would treat their captives in a different manner.¹³

Involuntary neighbours and opponents, Christians and Ottomans tried to capture as many soldiers and civilians as they could, to supplement their income with ransoms, to trade their captives for comrades or servants held by the other side, or to carry out some form of retaliation. This

¹¹MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok II. 249. cs. Nos. 21 and. 230. Ádám Batthyány to the Christian captives of Kanizsa. Németújvár, November 3, 1645.

¹²*Ibid.*, No. 118. “A Letter from the Poor Captives Lying in the Fortress of Szalónak to their Friends.” Szalónak, December 30, 1645 (copy). *Ibid.*, No. 133. “A Letter from the Poor Captives Lying in the Fortress of Szalónak to their Gallant Friends.” Szalónak, January 1, 1646 (copy).

¹³*Ibid.*, No. 123. Ádám Batthyány’s draft letter to the commander-in-chief of Kanizsa. Németújvár, January 28, 1646. Cited in Varga, *op. cit.*, 122.

is the origin of the Hungarian saying “Bad neighbours, Turkish curse.” Even in times of peace, much pillaging, destruction and fighting occurred, as evidenced by abundant archival data. Between 1633 and 1649,¹⁴ the Ottomans in Kanizsa and its environs captured or killed 4,200 persons, drove off 4,760 head of cattle and burned down dozens of houses in the border areas nearby.¹⁵ In addition, they occupied another forty-five villages and attempted to occupy another sixteen. In 1646, the Ottomans were particularly active: they captured or killed 319 soldiers and on the Batthyány estates pillaged four villages twice and the market town of Körmend once. In the region of Kemenesalja, they captured or killed almost the entire population of eight villages; the loss of human life there exceeded 1,000 souls in that year alone.¹⁶

For the Turks, fighting men, especially high-ranking ones, were more valuable than civilians, as their ransom could be set quite high. This is shown by the case of Péter Ányos, vice-captain of Kiskomárom. (The story of his release is linked to that of the *sipahi* Receb of Pécs, the central character in the present study.) Ányos only managed to leave Ottoman captivity as a result of the offer made in March 1649 by captain-general László Pethő,¹⁷ the lieutenants and voivodes of Kiskomárom fortress (including voivode Mihály Gyutai,¹⁸ Receb’s captor) and the private soldiers there to donate a month’s pay – a grand total of 1,159 florins 40 *denarii* – as his ransom.¹⁹

Settlements as yet unoccupied had to be protected by the border soldiers from subjugation, although the treaty prohibited both parties from exacting taxes from areas on the other side and from extending their territory. Of course, the Christians did not merely react to the challenges thrown down by the Ottomans, but launched attacks of their own. They

¹⁴The census was begun in 1633, obviously because this was when the then 23-year-old Ádám Batthyány I succeeded the deceased Pál Nádasdy in the seats of the district captain-general and of the captain-general of the area facing Kanizsa.

¹⁵MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok II. 249. cs. Nos. 22, 180, 230.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, No. 122.

¹⁷László Pethő had been captain-general of Kiskomárom since 1648.

¹⁸At other places written as Jutai.

¹⁹MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok II. 249. cs. No. 228. Kiskomár, March 31, 1649. Quoted also in Varga, *op. cit.*, 122.

were especially intent on forcing Serbs settled in the occupied areas and taxed by the Ottomans to pay taxes to them also.

In the case of raiding occupied and unoccupied villages there was, however, an important difference between Ottoman and Hungarian actions: the Muslims raided, almost without exception, settlements that were under their control and paying tax to them, while when the Christians did the same in most cases they had to release their captives because the lord of the community or the Serb village concerned immediately filed a complaint with the Palatine.

The Christians attacked not only Serb villages, but also Ottoman border fortresses and Muslim soldiers plundering in the area, thereby endeavouring to keep the enemy at bay. It may have been in the year 1646, so wretched for the Christian villages, or, according to other records, in 1645, that the Hungarians captured “the *sipahi* Receb of Pécs”, two of whose letters have survived in the Batthyány archive.²⁰ Through his writings and other entries, we can now gain some insight into the fortunes of an occupier.²¹

“My loving mother and my kind and gallant brother-in-law, when I am freed from my bitter captivity I shall be your humble servant. My well-meaning, gallant brother-in-law²² and my dear mother, may the great God provide you with everything good, etc. As regards my wretched captive state the Reverend Sándor²³ can inform you. I am sending this

²⁰MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1314, Missiles No. 39.628. The letter of Receb of Pécs to his mother and brother-in-law. Borostyánkő, February 5, 1646. (Address and seal missing, the reverse side is blank. The letter contains several insertions and corrections, apparently in a different ink and in a different hand. It is obviously a draft.) Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1315, 1. cs. I. Ádám iratai [Documents of Ádám I] No. 36. The letter of Receb of Pécs to his brother-in-law Hacı İbrahim of Kapos. Borostyánkő, August 17, 1646. – Receb of Pécs usually occurs in the lists of captives in 1646, but I have found a list from 1645 according to which the lord bought him in that year from Mihály Gyutai of Kiskomárom for 225 florins. Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok I. 248. cs. No. 104. According to other records, the lord bought him from the *haiducks* of Kiskomárom for 225 florins. *Ibid.*, No. 65.

²¹As it is short, the letter is published here in full. The writer’s Hungarian style and spelling are rather good, and thus obviously not indicative of the Turkish captive’s possible knowledge of Hungarian. He must have had somebody write the letter for him.

²²His brother-in-law, Hacı İbrahim of Kapos, obviously in Kaposvár. See MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1315, 1. cs. I. Ádám iratai No. 36.

²³He occurs in the documents several times as somebody who brings the ransom in the name of Turkish captives. He is identical with Sándor Laskai, a Reformed preacher who

message to say what ransom the Honourable Master demands from me, although I have not yet *in any way*²⁴ promised to pay *the ransom*,²⁵ before receiving news from you. Nevertheless, I humbly implore you for the sake of God²⁶ to take up my cause and not to let me die and be lost here in Germany,²⁷ *since the Master will not renounce any of his demands, as I understand from his words.*²⁸ If ever freed, I will surely become again your humble son and servant. I shall send more details through Sándor, who will report them by word of mouth. May God bless you. I had this written in the fortress of Borostyán (Borostyánkő), Germany, on the 5th day of February, 1646. Your humble son, Receb, a poor wretched captive suffering in dreadful captivity in the foreign land of Germany.”

Here is *sipahi* Receb's ransom:²⁹

“Cash	<i>thalers</i>	4,000 ³⁰
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in 1649 was the pastor of the occupied village of Vörösmart in Baranya county. I assume that Receb's letter was written by the Reverend Sándor, or was at least corrected by him. Between 1640 and 1657, he wrote a number of letters to Ádám Batthyány. In 1640, he was a parish pastor in Kéthely (Vas and Somogy counties), then, in 1642, in Somogyjád (Somogy county), and finally, in 1652, in Nágocs (Somogy county). From his letters to Batthyány, it becomes clear that he rendered great services to the captain-general by spying. Since he spoke excellent Turkish and also traded with the Turks, mostly in Batthyány's service, he was trusted by them and collaborated in the release of Turkish captives. Cf. László Balázs, “Laskai Sándor prédikátor levelei 1640–1657 [Letters of the Preacher Sándor Laskai 1640–1657],” *Egyháztörténet* 4 (1958) 303–340.

²⁴Inserted at the side of the page.

²⁵Inserted above the line.

²⁶Originally: “for Allah”, but this is crossed out and the expression “for God” is written above it, in another hand. I assume that the letter was corrected by the Reverend Sándor, who undertook a guarantee for the captives, thinking that the word “Allah” would infuriate the lord, who had the captives' letters censored.

²⁷The fortress of Borostyánkő and the estate were bought by Ádám Batthyány I from their previous owner, Kristóf Königspersg, in 1644. The estate was re-annexed to Hungary in 1647. The Turkish captives could rightly feel that Borostyánkő, being so far from Pécs, was somewhere in remote Germany. Another possibility is that here the Ottoman name *Nemçe* for the Habsburg Empire was translated as Germany. Vera Zimányi, *A herceg Batthyány család levéltára. Repertorium* [Archive of the Princely Family of the Batthyánys. Repository]. (Levéltári leltárak, 16.) Budapest, 1962. 11. Cf. *Corpus Juris Hungarici*, 471: 1647:71.

²⁸Inserted at the bottom of the page.

²⁹MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok I. 248. cs. No. 125.

³⁰4,000 *thalers* were worth 6,000 florins, and Ádám Batthyány himself calculated on this basis. (In this and the following cases, the florin is always a unit of account worth 100

Horses, suitable for a magnate	2,
and they should be to our taste; if he brings ones that we do not like, he will be obliged to bring others instead. Both should be supplied with turquoise-embellished gear, which together with the headstall should be decorated with silver and gold; they should bear horse-covers adorned with golden yarn, saddles that have a Karamanian ³¹ shape and are embellished with silver floral ornaments, and stirrups that are silver-gilt. They should each carry one silver broadsword inlaid with turquoise; and one gilded sabre inlaid with turquoise. Also, these should be of the kind carried by chief personages on their horses and on themselves at the Emperor's (i.e. sultan's) Porte. ³²	
Leopard skins suitable for a nobleman ³³	2
Tiger skins suitable for a nobleman ³⁴	2
Large-size <i>divan</i> carpets suitable for a nobleman ³⁵	12
Gold-brocaded quilts suitable for a nobleman ³⁶	12
Damascene quilts ³⁷	24

denarii, and is not identical with the golden florin or ducat); cf. Lajos Huszár, "Pénzforgalom és pénzürtékviszonyok Sopronban [Money Circulation and Money Values in Sopron]," in Dezső Dányi – Vera Zimányi, *Soproni árak és bérek a középkortól 1750-ig* [Prices and Wages in Sopron from the Middle Ages to 1750]. Budapest, 1989, 53–54.

³¹In the original "kármány". A Karamanian saddle probably exhibited floral patterns in the Turkish–Persian style of Karaman. Cf. László Zsámbéki, *Magyar művelődéstörténeti kislexikon* [A Concise Encyclopaedia of Hungarian Cultural History]. Budapest, 1986, 225. Zsuzsa Kakuk, *A török kor emléke a magyar szókincsben* [Mementoes of the Turkish Age in the Hungarian Language]. (Kőrösi Csoma Kiskönyvtár, 23.) Budapest, 1996, 99–100.

³²One such horse, in contemporary letters of ransom, cost at least 600–1,000 *thalers*, i.e. 900–1,500 florins.

³³Leopard skins were very popular at this time, and were worn as a complementary part of an aristocrat's attire. One leopard skin cost as much as 100 *thalers*. Cf. MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok II. 249. cs. No. 226.

³⁴Tiger skins had the same role and value as leopard skins.

³⁵*Divan*: the Ottoman Imperial Council and the council of governors-general. The notion of the *divan* carpet originates from there. The price of a fine *divan* (that is a large-size) carpet in Batthyány's register was 50 *thalers* (75 florins). MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok II. 249. cs. No. 226.

³⁶Its price in Batthyány's register is generally 10 *thalers* (15 florins). *Ibid.*

³⁷*Şami* (Damascene) quilt. In the register quoted above, the price of an ordinary quilt was 3 *thalers* (4 florins, 50 *denarii*). At other places the price of a quilt is 9 florins. Cf. *Ibid.*, No. 195 (1648).

Helmets inlaid with gold, suitable for a nobleman, with a Damascene top	2
Arm-guards inlaid with gold, suitable for a nobleman, Damascene work, pairs	2
Janissary muslin (<i>patyolat</i>), ³⁸ of fine quality, lengths ³⁹	32
Lengths of other muslin	32
Gold and silver wire (<i>skofium</i>) wrapped in paper of which three should weigh twenty-five ounces ⁴⁰	100
Fine camelhair <i>keçes</i> suitable for a nobleman ⁴¹	4
Fine large-size chequered two-ply <i>keçes</i>	24
Large-size silken belts, suitable for a nobleman ⁴²	12
If he presents all of these, he will be released in the name of God.”	

Apparently, this was the ransom list which the captive himself mentioned to his brother-in-law. Certainly, the ransom demanded was extremely high, perhaps unduly so. If we add to the 4,000 *thalers* in cash the value of the two horses with full gear and embellishments (each was worth 1,000 *thalers*) plus the estimated value of the other items, which may

³⁸Muslin (Turkish *tülbent*), a gauzy material similar to cambric in density but woven from more delicate cotton yarn and thus considerably lighter. Walter Endrei, *Patyolat és posztó* [Batiste and Broadcloth]. Budapest, 1989, 226, 232. A length of good-quality muslin was generally bought by Batthyány from the Turks for 10 florins. Cf. MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok II. 249. cs. No. 197. 2, 3, No. 252. – The price of Janissary muslin in Batthyány’s register was 4 *thalers* (6 florins). *Ibid.*, No. 226.

³⁹A length was a rather variable measure. A length of Austrian linen contained 30 cloth-yards, while a length of broadcloth contained 20 cloth-yards. Dányi – Zimányi, *op. cit.*, 22. Cloth-yard, *ulna*: 58.3–78.3 cm, in general 62 cm. István Bogdán, *Régi magyar mértékek* [Old Hungarian Measures]. Budapest, 1987, 59.

⁴⁰Half an ounce: 1.40–1.95 dkg. This formulation is unclear. On another list this lot is completely unambiguous: each paper should weigh 1.25 ounces. MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok I. 248. cs. No. 68. fol. 6. “Gold and silver wire (*skofium*) wrapped in paper”: 4 *thalers* each (6 florins). *Ibid.*, No. 68. fol. 8.

⁴¹*Keçe*: rug, horse-blanket, or bedcover made of felt (Zsámbéki, *op. cit.*, 299. Kakuk, *op. cit.*, 95–96). In the present case, it probably refers to a bedcover. A camel *keçe* for a bed cost 6 *thalers* (9 florins), while a good chequered *keçe* cost 20 *thalers* (30 florins). *Ibid.*, No. 226. At other places the price of a *keçe* is 3 *thalers* (4 florins 50 *denarii*). *Ibid.*, No. 195.

⁴²I have not discovered its monetary value.

have amounted to between 2,500 and 2,800 *thalers* in value, we get arrive at a total ransom of 8,500–8,800 *thalers*. By way of comparison, in the same record we find the ransom promised for Mehmed *ağa* of Ercsi, which amounted to 1,100 *thalers* plus a horse with gilded gear, although in another note Ádám Batthyány himself recorded how much the *ağa* was in the end forced to pay: 2,000 *thalers* in cash and a horse suitable for an aristocrat with gear decorated with silver and gold, with a breast-harness, headstall, scarlet broadcloth saddle and saddle-cloth, a broadsword embellished with silver and gold, and a tiger skin suitable for a nobleman.⁴³ If we overlook the other items, this was with regard to the cash and the value of the horse and its gear precisely half the amount demanded from the *sipahi*.

Hierarchies were taken seriously in this age. In another record,⁴⁴ Batthyány's captives are listed in precise order of rank: *çavuşes*, *ağas*, and *sipahis* (Receb among them) featured as the major captives and were followed by *odabaşıs*, *beşlis*, Janissaries, and servants.⁴⁵ When a captive was exchanged for another captive, i.e. when a captive was released for head ransom, the tariff was the following: a *sipahi* for a Hungarian nobleman, a *beşli* for a *hussar* and an Ottoman foot-soldier for a *haiduck*.⁴⁶ Receb is listed as a major captive in another record of Batthyány's as well.⁴⁷

However, a Batthyány draft addressed to Ahmed, the *alaybeyi* of Kanizsa, reveals much about those the lord regarded as major captives and those he considered merely as poor men: "We have received Your Honour's letter and what you write about Péter Ányos we have noted, as well as that our two Turkish captives are merely poor, sandal-wearing, forest-roaming Turks. For Your Honour's account not to be partial, *it*

⁴³MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok I. 248. cs. No. 113.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, No. 214.

⁴⁵The list contains 3 *çavuşes*, 4 *ağas*, 9 *sipahis*, 4 *odabaşıs*, 25 *beşlis*, 3 Janissaries, and 13 servants, i.e. a total of 61 captives, some of whom did not belong to Batthyány. Apart from these, 23 Turks who were captives of others were also registered. *Ibid.*

⁴⁶Letter from the captives held in the Stump Tower in Buda to Kristóf Batthyány, 1660. Cited in Sándor Takáts, "A török és a magyar raboskodás [Ottoman and Hungarian Captivity]," in *Idem, Rajzok a török világból* [Sketches from the Turkish World]. I. Budapest, 1915, 251. Pálffy, *op. cit.*, 56.

⁴⁷MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok II. 249. cs. No. 272. (Next to the expression "major captive" Batthyány wrote the following: "He has agreed to a ransom".)

*should mention that*⁴⁸ those are not sandal-wearing Turks who have two or three coloured horses at their houses and who each receive the pay of two or three *beşlis*. ... Péter Ányos could indeed have been a servant of Darabos's, as Darabos was a high-ranking, famous man, *a captain*,⁴⁹ while Ányos was only a *poor fellow*,⁵⁰ ... and although he was a vice-captain, he can never pay that much ransom. As concerns Receb of Pécs, he is a *zaim*'s son,⁵¹ a much higher-ranking man than Ányos, and should by rights pay not the ransom we demand from him but more, since we do not ransom our captives in a disorderly and unseemly fashion."⁵² As can be observed, Batthyány's spies had found out that Receb was no ordinary *sipahi*, but had a prosperous father who held a *ziamet*-estate. This was why Batthyány did not wish to barter away the major captive for the vice-captain of Kiskomárom. He now began shrewd negotiations, rejecting Ahmed's proposal to the effect that if the peasants listed in the register undertook to stand surety for Péter Ányos, then the latter could be handed over. Instead, he proposed that under a mutual granting of safe passage, Turkish soldiers should go to Kiskomárom where he would send his chief servants, and they should agree on a ransom for Ányos there. Batthyány pretended that he did not regard Péter Ányos as an important man at all, and that he did not care overmuch about his fate. Urging the *alaybeyi*'s reply, he added a warning: they should make haste because Ányos might die during the long negotiation process and then the *alaybeyi* would suffer a loss.

Owing to Batthyány's careful notes, in many cases we know which captive was bought by whom and how much was paid for him. Receb of Pécs was purchased by the aforementioned Mihály Gyutai, voivode of Kiskomárom, for 225 florins, while the *dominus* bought Mehmed *ağa* of Ercsi for 600 florins from Albert Tatai Nagy. In 1649, Batthyány paid an exceptionally high sum, 3,700 florins, to János Samodori and Farkas Kanizsai Rác for Ahmed, son of Mehmed *ağa* of Kaposvár, afterwards

⁴⁸Batthyány's own insertion.

⁴⁹Batthyány's own insertion.

⁵⁰Batthyány's own insertion.

⁵¹I.e. he was the son of a *ziamet*-holder (such prebends generally provided an annual income of 20,000–99,999 *akçes*).

⁵²MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok II. 249. cs. No. 203. Batthyány's draft letter to Ahmed, the *alaybeyi* of Kanizsa. s. d.

transferring him to János Sárkány, clearly for a head ransom.⁵³ These data illuminate the fact that the ransom agreed on did not always follow the order of the purchase price. It did not automatically depend on the Turkish captive's clothing and rank; the ransom also depended on a number of other factors, as we have seen in Receb's case: the family's wealth and the captive's health, age, and endurance. Batthyány angrily wrote thus about a captive of his who was reluctant to agree on a ransom: "As concerns this one (İbrahim of Bosnia), I calculate that he does not mind lying here long, but I know who he is; and I paid much for him. And this is how much his ransom will be, and he should abide by it if he ever wants to see his relations again."⁵⁴ And the lord then wrote next to the captive's name twenty-five times as much as had been promised by him.

Of course, a captive and his relatives tried to conceal his rank and wealth. Batthyány voiced his experiences in this regard in several acrimonious letters. In one such he wrote: "But it is our Turkish neighbour's habit that when someone of his falls captive, that person is immediately said to be a wretched beggar, and is made a beggar, but if he is killed, he is considered a man of substance (lit. 'stone castle'), as were those four Turks that the Egerszeg people killed; they are thoroughly lamented and held in high esteem."⁵⁵ Naturally, this strategy was utilised by both sides.

It also mattered from who Batthyány bought a captive: from an officer or from a simple private soldier, or whether he obtained him at a sale.⁵⁶ Soldiers were obliged to hand over the highest-ranking captives, and thus

⁵³Farkas Kanizsai Rác – as his name suggests – had probably come over to the Christians from the Turkish side. MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok I. 248. cs. No. 49. p. 134. *Ibid.*, No. 65.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok II. 249. cs. No. 144.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, No. 165. Ádám Batthyány's draft letter to Baş Hüseyin ağa of Kanizsa. March 19, 1652.

⁵⁶Several of Batthyány's captive registers and even jail-books have survived. In the register containing Receb, 51 Turkish captives are listed. Apart from these, there were six captives who were given by the lord to somebody else and another three who later died. There were also 36 Serbian captives. Thus at a given moment in 1646 there were altogether 96 captives. An average Turkish captive on this list had been bought by Batthyány for 30–70–100 florins from soldiers or at a sale; the lord had also bought captives for a vineyard and some had been given to him by his soldiers as presents. MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok I. 248. cs. No. 137.

beys also, to the captain-general of the border areas. They also had to present the captains of the fortresses with captives, and the right of pre-emption was an accepted custom.⁵⁷ The *dominus* often demanded a tierce from his warriors.⁵⁸ We even have a reference showing that in 1639 a poor village woman gave the *dominus* a captive called Ramazan of Dobrai from Kanizsa.⁵⁹ It also happened that Batthyány sometimes had to send captives to the monarch or some other person in Vienna as presents.

A captive's clothing, armour and horse said much about his position and wealth. His momentary property status also mattered: even if he held high office, if he had been ransomed not long before and had hardly anything left, or if his relatives were unwilling to help or were unavailable, he was not much use. If he was injured or sick, the costs of treatment were added to the sum of the ransom demanded. The documents show that for treatment captives were almost invariably taken to Rohonc, where a "prison infirmary" may have been operating.⁶⁰ The amount of the ransom was also dependent on the audacity of the captive in question: the captive registers clearly attest to the gradual disappearance during the bargaining process of the enormous difference that existed between a captive's first offer and the lord's demand, which amounted to a multiple of the former, with the final deal often being struck at around about the mean value of the two. The *sipahi* Osman of Kanizsa was purchased in 1649 by the captain-general from the people of Kapornak for 225 florins but, if the record can be credited, he only agreed on a ransom on December 22, 1654,⁶¹ while Mahmud Lantos ("the Lyrist") of Kanizsa became a Christian after six years of captivity in 1655, at the time of the Hungarian Diet in Pozsony.⁶² In 1651, Ferenc Wesselényi turned to Batthyány, "the benefactor of many poor captives", in the interests of a tough and audacious Hungarian warrior in Ottoman captivity, to obtain some donation for him: "His Honour Gábor Fay ... in his great distress has been comporting himself not like some craven,

⁵⁷Pálffy, *op. cit.*, 48–49. Varga, *op. cit.*, 123.

⁵⁸Varga, *op. cit.*, 124.

⁵⁹MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok I. No. 49. p. 6.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, No. 247. This document mentions three captives who were taken to Rohonc, to the "prison infirmary". In the handwritten version of this register by Batthyány there are other Turks who were taken to Rohonc for medical treatment. Cf. *Ibid.*, No. 248.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, No. 49. p. 111.

⁶²*Ibid.*, No. 49. p. 112. It was also cited by Varga, *op. cit.*, 122.

inglorious man but like a true soldier descended from noble blood, courageously, and has been forced to agree on a ransom after showing much fortitude and bearing long torment.”⁶³

With regard to the sum or value of the ransom, the following examples can be cited. In 1649, Batthyány bought Ali *bey* of Kaposvár from Jancsi Samadori for 1,500 florins. The captive agreed on a ransom the following year; he promised the lord 3,000 *thalers* in cash, good merchandise worth 1,000 *thalers*, a leopard skin for a nobleman, two horses with *beşli* gear and horse-blankets suitable for a nobleman, and also promised to redeem Mihály Merenyei, a Christian soldier burdened with a ransom of 500 *thalers*.⁶⁴ If the value of the merchandise demanded is calculated on the basis of average prices for these items at the time, this man’s ransom amounted to at least 5,000 *thalers* (7,500 florins),⁶⁵ less than that for Receb of Pécs. Mustafa of Pest was regarded as rather a good *sipahi* in 1651, obviously on account of his wealth.⁶⁶ The *sipahi* Murteza of Esztergom, alias Ali, was also considered rather a good captive, because his father, Hasan of Szigetvár enjoyed the revenues of six villages (Örményváraska, Sekes, etc.).⁶⁷ With this background, he agreed the following ransom: 3,000 *thalers*, a horse with “gilded gear inlaid with turquoise” and a fine leopard skin on it, suitable for a nobleman, or if the lord should not like it, then 1,000 *thalers* instead, and a Christian captive designated by Batthyány or 4,000 *thalers*. All this amounted to 8,000 *thalers* (12,000 florins). Receb’s status and financial background may have been similar to those of the *sipahi* Ali, since their ransoms were rather similar. Çelebi Mustafa Janchar (“Janissary”) of Buda, chief customs officer in Segesd, was worth even more than the *sipahis*; he was bought by the lord from a guide from Szentmihály and his companions for 1,200 florins in 1652. In the following year, the captive agreed to pay the following ransom: 5,000 *thalers*; 2,000 *thalers* worth of

⁶³MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1314, Missiles No. 51. p. 365. Ferenc Wesselényi’s letter to Ádám Batthyány I. Kassa, December 20, 1651.

⁶⁴MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok I. 248. cs. No. 49. p. 42.

⁶⁵A horse suitable for a nobleman, with a *beşli* headstall, was worth 200 *thalers*; cf. *ibid.*, No. 49. p. 28.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, No. 49. p. 84.

⁶⁷Unidentified settlements.

tradable goods; 1,000 good ox hides;⁶⁸ a horse with a saddle and a saddle-cloth decorated with silver wire (*skofium*) and bearing a gilded broadsword, suitable for a nobleman, worth at least 600 *thalers*; a beautiful round tent suitable for a “vizier” (or 600 *thalers*); and, finally, two ordinary Christian captives, “who were lost while making their living by the sword”.⁶⁹ Adding together the component parts of the chief customs officer’s ransom (8,200 *thalers*, 1,000 ox hides and two Christian captives each worth a few hundred *thalers*), we find that they amount to a total in excess of 10,000 *thalers*, i.e. 15,000 florins. This sum not only exceeded by far the 200–400 *thalers* ransom of an average Ottoman captive, but was also higher than that of the *bey* or any “good” *sipahi*. An even higher ransom was paid by the two women “the embroideress Fatima of Buda and Sabácsvár”⁷⁰ and “the young embroideress Satine (?) of Buda and Sabácsvár”, who were exchanged for György Fánecy’s⁷¹ brother, István, by Batthyány; the ransom paid by the two women was 13,000 *thalers* (19,500 florins) worth of cash, goods, and Christian captives.⁷²

In August 1646 both the *sipahi* Receb and Mehmed *ağa* were still unransomed, i.e. they had not made a final agreement with regard to their release. Then the *ağa* was taken to Németújvár, while Receb remained in Borostyánkő.⁷³

While Receb was reluctant to agree on a ransom and was just “lying” in the fortress of Borostyánkő, other trouble befell him: he was compelled to undertake a guarantee for an Ottoman captive from Szigetvár who then died, with the result that his ransom fell to Receb. This amounted to 200 *thalers*, 11 *keçes*,⁷⁴ 11 lengths of *aba* cloth,⁷⁵ 11 two-ply jackets or under waistcoats,⁷⁶ 11 lengths of cambric,⁷⁷ 11 lengths of Turkish linen,⁷⁸ 10

⁶⁸In Sopron, the price of an ox hide was 3 florins, but its price (between 2 and 4 florins) generally depended on its quality. Dányi – Zimányi, *op. cit.*, 23.

⁶⁹MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok I. 248. cs. No. 49. p. 70.

⁷⁰Presumably they came to Buda from the castle of Szabács.

⁷¹György Fánecy was Batthyány’s lieutenant.

⁷²We do not know how much they had to pay for István Fánecy besides this, or how much ransom he actually owed.

⁷³MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok I. 248. cs. No. 137.

⁷⁴We can assume the average price of a *keçe* to be 3 *thalers*; *ibid.*, No. 195.

⁷⁵One length of this cost 3 *thalers* (4 florins 50 *denarii*); *ibid.*, No. 195.

⁷⁶The price of a jacket or under-waistcoat was generally 3 *thalers*; *ibid.*, No. 226.

⁷⁷The price of a length of cambric was generally 2 florins; *ibid.*

⁷⁸The price of a length of linen was generally 2 florins, *ibid.*

coarse double covers,⁷⁹ 10 camelhair belts,⁸⁰ 5 pairs of crimson boots,⁸¹ 10 pairs of saffian foot-cloths,⁸² and 10 Turkish handkerchiefs.⁸³ These were worth approximately 360–370 *thalers* altogether.⁸⁴ To be a guarantor was a “favour” that obliged: a guarantor was liable to pay a comrade’s ransom should he not return and was often compelled to promise double or triple the ransom sum in this event. He could, moreover, expect to be severely flogged or even mutilated with regard to the body part that he had pledged in connection with his guarantee.⁸⁵ As Receb wrote, he had to suffer for a poor Turk captured along with him and furloughed on his guarantee because the captive did not return by the deadline set, nor did he send a message, and as he died three and a half months after the deadline had passed, and his corpse was sent up as evidence only then, the guarantee persisted and Receb remained liable.⁸⁶ The *sipahi* begged his brother-in-law, Hacı İbrahim of Kapos: “For God’s sake support me or I will become completely maimed because of this guarantee, for I have to wear two chains, but even though he died, he left sufficient for us to pay the warriors his ransom; and unless you send that ransom, I shall not be released.” He asked his brother-in-law to take, together with his mother, whatever was left by the deceased, or if he was

⁷⁹In the Hungarian original: *lasznák* (a cloak, coarse blanket, coarse woollen cover or horse blanket). For its contemporary variants (*lasznák, lasnak, lazna, lasnyak, or lazsnyak*), see István Szamota – Gyula Zolnai, *Magyar oklevél-szótár* [Dictionary of Hungarian Words in Medieval Latin Documents]. Budapest, 1902–1906 (reprinted in 1984), 578 and Endrei, *op. cit.*, 233. I have not found references to its price.

⁸⁰I have found no data on its price.

⁸¹Crimson: finely finished leather. The price of a pair of crimson boots was 3 florins. MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok I. 248. cs. No. 68., *ibid.*, P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok II. 249. cs. No. 195.

⁸²I have found no data on its price.

⁸³The price of a Turkish handkerchief was 1 florin. MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok II. 249. cs. No. 195.

⁸⁴MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok I. 248. cs., a slip of paper after No. 139.

⁸⁵MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok I. 248. cs., II. 249. cs. Among the Török vonatkozású iratok there are several letters of ransom and warrants; cf. No. 148 and Pálffy, *op. cit.*, 58–60. Sándor Takáts’s conception of the assumed good lot of Hungarian captives and the ruthless treatment of “poor Turkish captives” in contrast is utterly biased and unacceptable; cf. Takáts, “A török és a magyar raboskodás,” 160–303.

⁸⁶MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 131. 1. cs. “Duplicate of a letter by Receb of Pécs to his brother-in-law, the gallant Hacı İbrahim of Kapos.” Borostyán, August 17, 1646.

unwilling to help then to give the letter to his mother. The ending of the letter is written in a particularly affecting and personal tone and contains the following: "I would like my mother to send up my poor father's prayer-book. I also ask her to have a leather *dolama* made for me, and to send it to me on the first possible occasion because I am unclothed; and please do not forget to send some money along with it. Please give my regards to all my relations. Written in the fortress of Borostyán, *die 17. Augusti, Anno 1646*. Your poor wretched captive brother-in-law, Receb of Pécs.

P.S. I hear that my poor mother is now completely consumed by all this lamentation; I beg her to stop lamenting because however much we weep, it will not benefit us."

The *sipahi* Receb did not give in for a long time; according to a note without a date he promised 2,000 *thalers* but next to the figure Batthyány wrote in his own hand the following remark: "Let him lie,"⁸⁷ which meant a refusal. According to another census of captives compiled on November 21, 1646, the *sipahi* Receb in Borostyánkő had still not agreed on a ransom.⁸⁸

If a record dated March 8, 1647 can be credited, the *sipahi* had by then finally struck a deal with the lord. The sum and the quantity of goods agreed were exactly half the amounts Batthyány had initially wanted to elicit. There is a record of this in the hand of the captain-general himself:⁸⁹ "I have finally agreed with the *sipahi* Receb of Pécs on the ransom. He is to pay 2,000 *thalers* in cash, and one horse suitable for a nobleman. With this [horse] there should be silver and gilded gear inlaid with turquoise, along with a breast-harness,⁹⁰ curb,⁹¹ headstall, and crimson saddle, the front and rear of which should be covered with silver and gold, and it should come with silver-gilt stirrups with a Karamanian

⁸⁷At the top of the note the following date can be seen: Anno 1649. die 5. Aprilis. (MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok II. 249. cs. No. 204.) This is followed on the page by various records of ransoms. The date is not likely to refer to all the records. Ádám Batthyány I – in order to save paper – often wrote additional notes on one and the same sheet.

⁸⁸*Ibid.*, No. 140. After the record of October 22, 1647 the captives are registered again; among those in Borostyán we find Receb's name once more.

⁸⁹*Ibid.*, No. 146. Anno 1647. die Marci. A note in the hand of Ádám Batthyány I.

⁹⁰A decorated, padded leather strap around the horse's breast, fixing the saddle ahead.

⁹¹A bridle-bit, halter.

shape and a *csáprág* embroidered with silver-gilt and silver wire,⁹² and a silver-gilt broadsword nicely inlaid with turquoise of the kind seen at the Porte...⁹³ I have written above what his ransom will contain, and everything should be suitable for a great nobleman and should be fine and good, both the accessories and the horse. If he should bring such things as will not please us and we would not like, we shall not accept them but shall return them, and he will be obliged to bring other things of the kind that we would like and will take from him, and he should not be delayed in fetching these but should bring all his ransom promised and written in a short time, and he will not be allowed to retreat in any way from what he has promised.”⁹⁴

It would not have been easy for Receb to collect this much money and chattels of such high quality. The list agreed amounted to what was every Hungarian magnate’s wish at the time: a fine Turkish horse with silver-gilt gear inlaid with turquoise, along with a saddle and broadsword that together cost at least 600–1,000 *thalers* (900–1,500 florins) and that might have been difficult to obtain since from time to time the export of horses and perhaps also of weapons from the Ottoman Empire was prohibited.⁹⁵ The Damascene helmet and arm-guards belonged among the possessions of high-ranking warriors of the age, as did tiger and leopard

⁹²A decorated saddle-cloth. The *csáprág* (Turkish *çaprag*) may have been a Hungarian loanword in the contemporary Turkish (Osmanlı) language; cf. Kakuk. *op. cit.*, 327.

⁹³This is followed by exactly one half of the quantities for the entries on the ransom list given above. See note 29.

⁹⁴The fact that Receb of Pécs had agreed on a ransom is also recorded by another list of captives in Batthyány’s own hand, dated November 27, 1647. MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok II. 249. cs. No. 171. There is still some uncertainty concerning the sum of the ransom; as we shall see, after bringing 2,000 *thalers* the *sipahi* still owed another 2,000, which would suggest that he was expected to pay the sum originally set. But on the basis of another register it seems likely that Receb undertook to pay the second 2,000 *thalers* instead of the merchandise that he would have had to deliver, because later there is mention only of the money and the horse as parts of the debt to be paid. Moreover, he had to fulfil his obligations as guarantor. *Ibid.*, No. 68.

⁹⁵Takáts, “A török és a magyar raboskodás,” 271–272. For the Ottoman prohibition on the export of weaponry, horses and raw materials of military importance, see also Gábor Ágoston, “*Merces Prohibitae*: The Anglo-Ottoman Trade in War Materials and the Dependence Theory,” *Oriente Moderno* 20 (81), n. s. 1 (2001) 177–192, esp. 182.

skins (these each cost 100 *thalers* and 50 *thalers*, respectively).⁹⁶ The half dozen Turkish carpets, the same number of gold-brocaded quilts, the dozen ordinary quilts, the lengths of muslin, the camelhair blankets, the silk belts, and the units of silver-gilt and silver wire were not only great in value, but also great in number. It should be remembered that apart from obtaining the money there was also the purchasing of the goods, which, if produced abroad, had to be transported to Hungary on wagons under appropriate escort, or else highwaymen would carry them off. Captives often had to make ten to fifteen or even more procurement journeys; this was particularly so with ordinary Ottoman captives who often paid their ransom in salt blocks, while Serbian captives paid it in pigs, sheep or oxen.

On March 9, 1647, Receb of Pécs became first guarantor, followed by sixteen others, for Mehmed, son of Hüseyin Kis (“the Small”) of Pécs, who had Ahmed of Székesfehérvár as a “delegate or companion” to travel with him so “that Mehmed of Pécs should raise his ransom and bring some of it by the deadline given, and should also manage the business and ransom of Receb of Pécs and bring good civilian guarantors along with the preacher Sándor from Hetes and Nagybajom.⁹⁷ ... And if he should not return by the given deadline, the 22nd, together with Ahmed of Székesfehérvár, then the guarantors will each be given 500 strokes and the ransom of Mehmed of Pécs will fall to them in double amount, along with 3,000 *thalers* for Ahmed of Székesfehérvár.”⁹⁸ Thus, according to this record, our *sipahi* began his efforts to raise the ransom (albeit not in person) as early as the second day after the deal. The inhabitants of prosperous market towns and villages were often forced by the Ottomans to act as guarantors of valuable captives.⁹⁹ It is a noteworthy fact that in this case it was the captain-general of Transdanubia himself who wanted guarantors from the occupied villages for his Turkish captive. It can be

⁹⁶In one of Ádám Batthyány’s notes referring to Turkish goods there is mention of a beautiful tiger skin for 100 *thalers* and a leopard skin for 50 *thalers*. MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok II. 249. cs. No. 226.

⁹⁷Hungarian villages in Somogy county. In 1647, Sándor Laskai was the pastor of Nagybajom. Balázs, *op. cit.*, 325.

⁹⁸MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok II. 249. cs. No. 148. For the messenger and the captive’s companion, cf. Pálffy, *op. cit.*, 64–65. Varga, *op. cit.*, 129.

⁹⁹Takáts, *op. cit.*, 218. Cf. Pálffy, *op. cit.*, 60.

assumed that Receb of Pécs had enjoyed the revenues of the two villages mentioned, Hetes and Nagybajom, as their Ottoman “lord”.

On August 9, 1647, the *sipahi* Receb of Pécs, Mehmed *ağa* of Ercsi, Mehmed Operka of Vál, and Bekir of Koppány produced guarantors for themselves; they were given leave for six weeks, each to bring the horse and some of the ransom money he had promised. In case that they should not return, their guarantors would receive 300 strokes each, would be accountable with the body part that they had pledged, and would be obliged to pay the ransoms of those they had guaranteed.¹⁰⁰ In Borostyánkő, three captives undertook a guarantee for the *sipahi*, pledging one tooth each. Another captive there pledged a finger, while in Szalónak seven captives pledged a tooth, a finger or an ear. Batthyány even carefully recorded which captive was burdened with what guarantee. By the terms of the agreement, the six weeks given expired on Monday, September 20 that year.¹⁰¹

If the dates in the disorderly records can be credited, the *sipahi* Receb left again on February 2, 1648 to make arrangements concerning his ransom, because four Turkish and Serbian captives in Borostyánkő, 23 in Szalónak, and 28 in Némétújvár undertook a guarantee for him, each pledging a finger, a tooth or an ear, with the additional condition that if he should go astray, they would be liable to pay his ransom also. It is astonishing that he had as many as 55 guarantors, but we should not forget that his ransom was rather considerable.¹⁰² This time his term of leave may have been three weeks, because on February 24 he was again back in the fortress of Borostyánkő, now himself undertaking a guarantee for Hacı Ali of Székesfehérvár (whose ransom was the son of the captain Pál Fáncsi and 800 blocks of selected rock salt), for Mehmed of Zsámbék, whose ransom was 1,000 gold coins and a horse with full gear suitable for a nobleman, and for Ahmed *ağa* of Pécs.¹⁰³

On June 3 the same year, the *sipahi* was sent out yet again. The conditions were the same as before: if he should stay “in there” or should die after his term of leave ended, his ransom would be paid by his guarantors, who would also be accountable with whatever body part they

¹⁰⁰MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok II. 249. cs. No. 157.

¹⁰¹Cf. Imre Szentpétery, *Oklevéltani naptár* [A Calendar of Diplomats]. Budapest, 1912, calendars 28 and 113.

¹⁰²MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok II. 249. cs. No. 199.

¹⁰³*Ibid.*

had pledged.¹⁰⁴ As a messenger (*posta*), i.e. as a permanent contact, the aforementioned Mehmed of Zsámbék was designated. The note also contains the remaining part of the ransom, to fall to the guarantors if the *sipahi* should not return: 1,000 gold coins and a horse with gilded gear suitable for a nobleman of the kind that viziers ride when going to the *divan*. In this case 22 captives in Szalónak, seven in Borostyánkő and five in Rohonc (34 captives altogether) pledged a body part in the interests of the *sipahi*. The majority had also been involved in the previous pledge, mostly with the same body part.¹⁰⁵

On June 24, 1648, Mehmed of Zsámbék was let out under guarantee, accompanied by Receb. The two captives repeated the journey of three weeks before, but in a reverse casting. If the records are correct, this was the *sipahi*'s fourth trip, although this time he was not primarily travelling on his own business.

Receb returned to his captor from his fourth trip before July 12, 1648, and undertook a guarantee again, this time (with 12 others) for Jankó Komlér Rác of Keszű (Baranya county). Then, on July 19, he undertook another (with 26 others) for Operka of Vál and for Ahmed of Székesfehérvár. In this last case, the guarantee was not without its risks, "because he (Ahmed) was in there three times and has done a Gypsy's job (i.e. brought nothing), and if he should do the same again, he will be punished as well as his guarantors, and if he should stay in there or should die after his term of leave has ended, his guarantors listed below will be liable to pay the ransom which His Honour our master first required of him, or to bring out [István] Keresztúri¹⁰⁶ and pay under guarantee the ransoms of those he sent in."¹⁰⁷ This time, 17 captives were compelled to undertake the burdensome task, among them the *sipahi* Receb, who, as before, pledged one of his teeth. We do not know whether in this case Receb kept his tooth, but Keresztúri's case was not advanced. The captors were therefore forced to send, on November 3, the more reliable Mehmed of Zsámbék on this business, for whom 21 persons, Receb not being among them, each stood guarantee with a body part and 1,000 gold coins.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶One of Ádám Batthyány's warriors, held in captivity in Székesfehérvár.

¹⁰⁷MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok II. 249. cs. No. 199.

¹⁰⁸*Ibid.*

In December 1648, our *sipahi* was again registered with six others as a captive in Borostyánkő; and Batthyány wrote next to his name the word “Gypsy”, meaning somebody who had in some way deceived his captor.¹⁰⁹ He did this although Receb’s companions in distress, Mehmed *ağa* of Ercsi and Operka of Vál (who both went out with him to collect their ransoms) did in fact bring some of them to Batthyány, since from the *ağa*’s ransom the captain-general redeemed three Christian captives for 1,584 *thalers*, and from Operka’s ransom one Christian for 420 *thalers*.¹¹⁰ In 1648, the count liberated a total of 18 Hungarians for 7,194 *thalers*, 850 florins, some lengths of cloth, and seven Turkish captives.¹¹¹ It seems likely that Receb found himself in trouble again because of Ahmed of Székesfehérvár, as the names of the other two persons mentioned above did not appear on the list of his guarantors, while Receb’s did. The captive sent out did not manage to recover Keresztúri: in the register of January 12, 1649 it was written next to his name that he “did a Gypsy’s job”, i.e. that he failed, in the Keresztúri business,¹¹² and moreover that he brought trouble on his guarantors, who had to forfeit the body parts they had pledged and to pay his ransom. Captives who caused trouble for their guarantors were also punished by their own side. In Ádám Batthyány’s fortresses there were Christian captives also, among them soldiers who had behaved dishonourably towards their fellow-captives; András Büki, for instance, was imprisoned because “in Kanizsa he had brought trouble on his guarantors”,¹¹³ and György Böythe of Alsólendva was taken to Rohonc for the same reason.¹¹⁴

Receb, too, had to suffer for the guarantee he had undertaken. In February 1650, Batthyány had all the Ottoman captives listed, along with those of their guarantors whose deadline for return in 1649 had now long since passed. A mark was placed next to the names of the guarantors who had to be flogged on account of those who had not returned. Receb of

¹⁰⁹*Ibid.*, No. 192.

¹¹⁰From the ransom received for Mehmed *ağa* of Ercsi, Batthyány redeemed János Kaszai for 584, Lőrinc Nagy for 289 and Gyurkó Ákai for 711 *thalers* respectively; *ibid.*, No. 192.

¹¹¹*Ibid.*

¹¹²*Ibid.*, No. 205.

¹¹³*Ibid.*, No. 217.

¹¹⁴*Ibid.*, No. 220. György Böythe served at Alsólendva. Varga, *op. cit.*, 129.

Pécs occurs three times on this list as a guarantor, and there are three marks next to his name.¹¹⁵

However, Receb was in trouble not only as a guarantor, but also because of his own ransom: according to a note, on his first, second, third, and fourth trip he “did a Gypsy’s job, brought nothing”. Only on his fifth period of leave did he present 1,000 *thalers* for Péter Ányos’s ransom in Kanizsa.¹¹⁶ According to a list of three days later, however, he was preparing to depart on one more procurement journey.¹¹⁷ It seems that these successful journeys began only in 1648, since according to another entry, which labelled the first of his trips the first actually to produce some result, on two further occasions he brought 90 *thalers* in farthings, and then another 899 *thalers*, making a total of 1,989 *thalers* altogether. According to the source, he still had 2,011 *thalers* to pay. He then brought a horse, but the lord rejected it because he did not like it; it was not of acceptable quality. Receb promised to bring one more horse in addition, or to pay 200 *thalers* instead.

The fine horse suitable for a nobleman was never brought by the *sipahi*. From the beginning of his captivity, Receb had been reluctant to give in to the master’s demands and had by now already spent long years in captivity. He therefore resorted to trickery and deceit; clearly, he did not wish to sacrifice the greater part of his fortune for his freedom. As we have seen, he brought nothing to begin with, and then tried to deliver goods of inferior quality. When this turned out to be ineffective, he solicited the help of the notables of Kanizsa to have his ransom reduced. In this connection, Baş Hüseyin *ağa* wrote several letters to the captain-general, who remained relentless even so: “Just as we do not interfere with the ransoms of your captives, you should not interfere with ours either, but they should pay what they promised, and moreover since Turkish warriors compel captives to deliver their ransoms all at once, we shall henceforth, unlike hitherto, desire our captives to bring them not in small portions but all at once, because we learn all such things from over there, from Turkish soldiers. ... We are mindful that Receb promised us not a horse for children, as the one he brought, but a fine and great horse for a great lord, one which we should like and, for that reason, this is

¹¹⁵MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok II. 249. No. 249.

¹¹⁶*Ibid.*, No. 68. fol. 6.

¹¹⁷*Ibid.*, No. 205.

what we expect from him, or will make him pay the price of it, because he started pretending and lying to us, but we shall take care of him.”¹¹⁸

However, the *sipahi* did not wait for Batthyány to “take care of him” but changed tactics again, now irreversibly: violating his promise and betraying his fellow-captive guarantors, he escaped. No man who had respect for the honour of the warrior would let anybody suffer on his account, but would return honourably with his ransom, to free his guarantors from their burden. If he was for some reason unable to return, he would write or send a message to his captor, lest others should suffer because of him. Receb chose another path. It is no excuse for him – merely an explanation – that he, too, had suffered for the dishonourable behaviour of others: he had been flogged a number of times and forced to take upon himself the payment of their ransoms.

In December 1653, Batthyány was repeatedly obliged to turn to one of the *ağas* of Kanizsa to have Receb sought out, since “it is impossible that a man should not be found from here to Constantinople, because if he were with us, we would seek him out wherever he would hide, and we would not let the poor guarantors be tortured on his account”.¹¹⁹ Now he already wanted the return of the *sipahi* in person, but was willing at the *ağa*’s request to send in two captives for 30 days to deliver back to him either Receb himself or the 2,000 *thalers* demanded for the *sipahi*, plus the value of the guarantee on that individual.

In February 1654, Batthyány notified the *ağas* of Kanizsa that they had two captives from Eger who had seen the *sipahi*: “But it is rather easy to see what devices and artful misguidance have been used there, for who would believe that all those gallant men in Turkey¹²⁰ were unable to find him while these two captives could.”¹²¹ The lord ran out of patience: now he wanted not to distribute the ransom across the guarantors for them to pay it in individual portions, but instead either the *sipahi* in person or all of the ransom for him in one lump sum. At the same time,

¹¹⁸*Ibid.*, No. 165. Draft letter of Ádám Batthyány to Baş Hüseyin *ağa* of Kanizsa. March 19, 1652.

¹¹⁹*Ibid.*, No. 174/a. Draft letter of Ádám Batthyány to Baş Hasan [Hüseyin] *ağa*. Németújvár, December 17, 1653. (The upper part of the document is seriously damaged.)

¹²⁰Batthyány and his contemporaries often referred to the occupied parts of Hungary as Turkey.

¹²¹MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1313, Török vonatkozású iratok. 249. cs. No. 183. Draft letter of Ádám Batthyány to the *ağas* of Kanizsa. February 14, 1654.

he threatened to retaliate against the guarantors, because “from now on we shall maintain a different attitude towards them, and will show that they are not dealing with children who can be cheated with such deceitful tricks.” Subsequently, Batthyány refused to pay ransom to those in Kanizsa, because of the “false devices” in the matter of Receb.¹²²

In April 1654, Receb was still hiding in Kanizsa or the surrounding area. The *ağas* of Kanizsa several times offered a Hungarian captive, Pusserffy, in exchange for him, but to no avail, as the captain-general continued forcefully to demand him back along with his ransom, because “we do not play in speech or in writing, and when we say or write something, we keep to it.”¹²³ If Receb would not come out with the messenger, his guarantors would suffer according to their pledges, Batthyány warned. At the same time, the captain-general reminded the *ağas* of their promise that they would send after Receb, and that when found he would be sent to Batthyány in bonds. Three weeks later Batthyány had to warn again; he had waited eight or ten days he said, but those in Kanizsa had still done nothing to live up to their promise.¹²⁴

Obviously for good money, the *ağas* of Kanizsa on the one hand did all they could to protect Receb from being delivered to his former captor, and on other all they could to avoid angering the captain-general of Transdanubia unduly. This was why they kept proposing an exchange of captives: they would release the aforementioned Hungarian captive for a head ransom if they would not have to deliver Receb. By way of an excuse, they even wrote that the *sipahi*'s ransom was not yet collected and that the lord might therefore suffer a material loss by not agreeing. However, Batthyány treated the case as a matter of prestige, with reason. His final reply was formulated in the following words: “We wish nothing but that you send out our captive Receb; whatever we can get for him we will take, whatever we cannot will be our loss; we will be content with our captive. If you do not send him out, his guarantors will get to know the rod, they have avoided it thus far only in view of Your Honour's letter, as we have been waiting for him to be sent out, but from now on

¹²²*Ibid.* Draft letter of Ádám Batthyány to the *sipahi* İbrahim of Kanizsa. s.d.

¹²³*Ibid.*, No. 182. Draft letter of Ádám Batthyány to the chief *ağas* of Kanizsa. Németh-újvár, April 22, 1654. Pusserffy was the vice-commander of Kiskomárom fortress in 1640s. MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. Batthyány Ádám leveleskönyve P 1315/4 B. p. 257.

¹²⁴*Ibid.*, No. 185. Draft letter of Ádám Batthyány to the chief *ağas* of Kanizsa. May 14, 1654.

they will be treated in line with their pledges ... We shall not go back on what we have said or what we have written;¹²⁵ there is no use writing about this. *Because about this we will not write, nor will we send any message, but we know what we have to do. We wish that Receb come to us with the messenger sent for him in three or four days with your offer and letter, at once.*¹²⁶

We might think that the story ended here, since Batthyány had written clearly that he did not wish to negotiate any further concerning Receb. However, among the documents of the magnate who administered everything so precisely are the letters of the *ağas* of Kanizsa: as has already turned out from the letters cited above, they pleaded for “poor, wretched” Receb so that he would not have to die, because “he had nothing in this world”, and they asked Batthyány to allow him and Pusserffy, the Hungarian mentioned above, to be released; for this they would make a particular recompense.¹²⁷

We cannot know how the once prosperous young *sipahi*, now spending his ninth year in captivity, endured the turns of his fate; and how long the office-holders of Kanizsa hesitated over whether to give him up to his captor, who might then avenge himself for the losses and blows to his prestige occasioned by Receb, or to refuse Batthyány’s demand, accepting the not inconsiderable consequences of angering the captain-general. They could be certain that were the captive sent back to the fortress of Borostyánkő, he might well not survive his punishment. But – the counter-argument may have run – if they did not give him up, they risked the lives of his guarantors, as well as the release of other captives, and in Batthyány’s fortresses there were a large number of Turkish and Serbian captives awaiting an upturn in their fortunes. The Ottoman leaders of Kanizsa also had to take care to preserve the honour and credibility of their word. They could not sacrifice this much for one person. At the same time, Receb’s life would not have been safe in Kanizsa either; a relation or fellow-sufferer of the guarantors flogged to death would have hunted down the former captive, or else Batthyány’s

¹²⁵I.e. he will not change his mind.

¹²⁶*Ibid.*, No. 186. Draft letter of Ádám Batthyány to the chief *ağas* of Kanizsa. s. d. [1654]. The italicised sentences were added in Batthyány’s own hand, probably for emphasis.

¹²⁷MOL Batthyány cs. lvt. P 1314, Missiles. No. 23.859. The letter of the chief *ağas* of Kanizsa to Ádám Batthyány. Kanizsa, 1654; *ibid.*, No. 23.860.

own men would have sought him out. Receb's destiny was sealed in any event: with his falling into captivity his military career had been wrecked, and with his escape his life had been jeopardised.

Eventually the *ağas* of Kanizsa made their decision: with one more letter of apologies and appeals they sent back the "poor, wretched, and strayed" Receb.¹²⁸ His escape was explained by the assertion that the Christian captive had assumed the *sipahi*'s ransom, i.e. that he wished to be released for a head ransom, and promised to deliver the money to the lord. "Great gallant Master, ... we give Receb into your hands, sending him out trusting in Your Honour's humanity. For the sake of our friendship, we beseech you as a gallant warrior not to punish the poor fellow."

The last data we have concerning the *sipahi* are from 1657; he had survived the punishment he had received for his escape and was in the twelfth year of his captivity. In his long dealings with Batthyány he was the loser, since although he eventually delivered his ransom, he was still in custody, at that point anyway. The *ağas* of Kanizsa, very politely, petitioned Batthyány in the following manner: "Great gallant Master, poor Receb has paid his ransom and yet he is detained; we ask Your Honour to release him."¹²⁹

¹²⁸*Ibid.*, No. 23.857. The chief *ağas* of the border fortress of Kanizsa to Ádám Batthyány. Kanizsa, 1654. (There is no precise date.)

¹²⁹*Ibid.*, No. 23.869. The chief *ağas* of Kanizsa to Ádám Batthyány, Kanizsa, 1657.

RANSOMING OTTOMAN SLAVES FROM MUNICH (1688)

JÁNOS J. VARGA

On September 2, 1686, 78 days after the beginning of the siege of Buda, the efforts of the troops of Charles, Duke of Lorraine and of Maximilian Emmanuel, Elector of Bavaria, finally paid off. After the allied forces had broken through the Ottoman defences, the commander-in-chief Abdurrahman pasha, protected by his bodyguards, withdrew to one of the parallel streets of the burgher town, where he continued to fight manfully. Through his personal bravery he managed to rally some of his men, already in full retreat, around himself, but most of them soon ran away in fear of being surrounded. The old pasha, who refused to escape with his own soldiers, resisted to the last and died fighting, winning the respect even of his enemies.

It was between the two quarters of the castle, on the four-sided square of the Arsenal that the Christians advancing from the burgher town in the south and those coming from the Palace in the north surrounded the inhabitants of the castle who rushed there from all directions. Aside from the women and children some 2,000 soldiers and burghers were taken prisoner.¹ The Elector of Bavaria received 345,² among them İsmail pasha, commander of the Palace and of the Ottoman positions against the Bavarians,³ Abdi ağa, Abdurrahman's majordomo, a certain Lami *efendi*, Hasan pasha, and "Budaimla" (probably Budimli) Mehmed.

¹*Lotharingiai Károly hadinaplója Buda visszafoglalásáról* [The War Diary of Maximilian Emanuel of the Siege of Buda]. Edited by József Kun. Budapest, 1986, 214.

²Ludwig Hüttl, *Max Emanuel der Blaue Kurfürst*. München, 1976, 594. Another source speaks of 350 prisoners. Johann Konstantin Feigius, *Wunderbahrer Adlers-Schwung*. Bd. 2. Wien, 1694, 247 (Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel, Gv 942).

³İsmail pasha was set free on August 8, 1687, four days before the battle of Nagyharsány. According to Louis Hector, marquis de Villars, then staying in the camp of Maximilian, his ransom – 70,000 golden florins, a sable and some pearls – was put together by the Ottoman army. János J. Varga, *A fogyó félhold árnyékában. A török kiűzése Magyarországról* [In the Shadow of the Waning Crescent. The Expulsion of the Ottomans from Hungary]. Budapest, 1986, 152. Others think that he was redeemed by the Ottoman

The prisoners⁴ of Maximilian Emmanuel were transported by three ships on the Danube⁵ to Regensburg, whence they were escorted by soldiers to the villages and towns which had been designated for them around Munich. Some of them remained in the Elector's capital, where they were accommodated in the garrisons by the south-eastern Isar gate.⁶ At first they were kept under a close watch: they could not leave their buildings and were not allowed to receive visitors without the permission of one of the members of the electoral War Committee.⁷ These visits soon brought about profound changes in their lives, however. The citizens and nobles of Munich began to take Turkish pages and servants and paraded with retinues consisting of boys and girls dressed in Turkish national costume. Maximilian Emmanuel even set up a guild of Turkish sedan-bearers, who transported his family and the most distinguished members

court. Ferenc Szakály, *Hungaria eliberata. Budavár visszavétele és Magyarország felszabadítása a török uralom alól 1683–1718* [Hungaria eliberata. The Siege of Buda and the Liberation of Hungary from Ottoman Rule]. Budapest, 1986, 70.

⁴The identification of the latter three is almost impossible, owing to the laconic reports of the contemporary sources and to the distortions caused by the adaptation of Turkish names to German. The names contained in our primary source, issued on October 15, 1687 at Pest (BHStA KA B. Türkenkriege 8. b. Kriegsgefangenen. Türken und deren Austausch gegen Bayern 1683–1703) have been compared with the list, drawn up on October 25, 1686, which contains the names of 205 Turkish prisoners (MOL E 284, Budai Kamarai Adminisztráció Regisztraturája, Miscellanea, 1. No. 96, fols. 91–93). None of our three captives can be found among them. More useful is the work of Giovanni Paolo Zenarolla, provost of Székesfehérvár (*War Diary or the Siege of Buda*. Published in Hungarian by Ferenc Szakály in *Buda visszafoglalásának emlékezete* [In Memoriam of the Recapture of Buda]. Budapest, 1986, 93–177), which gives the names of Turkish officers and other “distinguished persons” who were taken away as prisoners after the fall of Buda (pp. 176–177). Although Lami *efendi* cannot be found among them, there figures a “Mali Chiatibi Osman Effendi” who is “at His Majesty the Elector of Bavaria”. Hasan pasha seems to be identical with the “Hassan Ciorbagi Chiaia Bej” of Zenarolla who is also “at the Elector of Bavaria”. No information concerning Budaimla Mehmed can be found in the provost's list.

⁵Feigius, *op. cit.*, 247.

⁶BHStA KA Handschrift, Türkenkrieg 1683–1688. No. 327. 476: Friedrich Münich, *Materialen zu den Feldzügen gegen die Türken 1683–1688*, October 29, 1686, November 30, 1686.

⁷*Ibid.*, January 27, 1687. Problems of discipline are attested by the report of lieutenant Stumpf, head of the guard, from February 25, 1687, according to which the corporal on duty sent some of the Turks, escorted by a musketeer, to beg in the city, but they spent the money on drink and the alcohol made them “sick”.

of his court in the city.⁸ Those fit for hard work were directed to Schleissheim, the Elector's favourite summer residence, some 12 kms from the centre of Munich, where the construction of the castle of Lustheim, surrounded by a huge park, had been going on since 1684 under the supervision of the Italian Enrico Zuccalli. Turks felled timber in the woods, assisted the masons, the stone-cutters and the carpenters, and it was also they who planted the 2,000 lime trees along the roads, squares and pools of the geometrically structured garden.⁹ They received 8 *kreutzers* a day from the Chamber, paid on a regular two-week basis. Those who were fortunate enough to make soldier's cloaks in the "Fabrica" of Munich could earn even more.¹⁰ Nevertheless, they often complained of poor supplies and sometimes appeased their hunger with stolen meat or with a salad made from leek and wild sorrel.¹¹

The hundreds of kilometres which separated them from the Ottoman Empire made escape impossible. Only those officers and public servants could hope for delivery who were ready to pay the huge ransom or could be exchanged for Christian prisoners. 57 such persons left Munich in September 1687 and sailed down the Danube to Buda under the command of Johann Christoph Griennagl, Maximilian's bodyguard, and of Sebastian Keuffel, employee of the "Fabrica".¹² The contingent, consisting of 32 pashas,¹³ 3 *ağas*,¹⁴ 14 *sipahis*,¹⁵ an *efendi*,¹⁶ a *zabit*,¹⁷ five unknown office-holders and a servant, was taken over by Johann

⁸Hüttl, *op. cit.*, 156.

⁹Gerhard Hojer, *Schleissheim. Neues Schloss und Garten*. München, 1980, 9–10, 13, 27. Hüttl, *op. cit.*, 595. The Elector saw to it that sufficient manpower should always be at hand: in 1688 he sent more than 400 Turkish prisoners from Hungary. Hüttl, *op. cit.*, 594.

¹⁰BHStA KA B. Türkenkriege 8. b. July 11, 1692.

¹¹*Ibid.*, BHStA KA Handschrift No. 327. December 24, 1696.

¹²BHStA KA B. Türkenkriege 8. b. July 1, 1688.

¹³The word *paşa* does not refer here to the chief officer in charge of a *vilayet*; rather, it should be understood as *başa* (another variant: *beşe*), a title given to ordinary soldiers or rather to lower-ranking officers (mainly among the Janissaries). Cf. J. Deny, *Paşa*. In: *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*. VIII. 279b.

¹⁴Here: head of a Janissary regiment.

¹⁵Cavalryman.

¹⁶Literate, officer.

¹⁷A military officer with limited authority. Gustav Bayerle, *Pashas, Beks and Effendis. A Historical Dictionary of Titles and Terms in the Ottoman Empire*. Istanbul, 1997, 162.

Balthasar Peck, the Elector's commissary for provisions and stores, who set up a list of them on October 15, 1687.¹⁸

Only a couple of weeks after they had been housed in the round bastion of Pest, a truly shocking event happened. While commissary Peck was busily engaged in organising the prisoners' journey to the Ottoman Empire, where they were to collect their ransom, two of them, Mustafa Ali and Emikati pasha secretly opened a hole in the bastion's wall and escaped.¹⁹ Eight of their fellow-prisoners followed their example. One of the Elector's local officers surprised them in the midst of their preparations, however, and the Turks had no choice but to beat him to death in order to avoid arrest. Three of the fugitives were captured by the *haiducks*, who killed two on the spot while the third, the *sipahi* Hüseyin was taken back to Pest. All the others had managed to disappear.²⁰ After the incident Peck subjected some of the prisoners to a merciless flogging – the victims must have been among those later mentioned as dead –, relieved the guard²¹ and turned all of his attention to those from whom his lord could surely expect a ransom and the exchange of prisoners: to Abdi *ağa* and his servant, Mehmed, to Lami *efendi*, Hasan pasha and Budaimla Mehmed.

The most distinguished among them was evidently Abdi *ağa*, who as “Chihaia”²² or “Thyaia, Thiaja” (*kethüda*, deputy) pasha²³ was mentioned as seneschal or vice-commandant (“Vice-Commendant zu Ofen”) of the late Abdurrahman, *beylerbeyi*²⁴ of Buda. At the end of 1687 Abdi *ağa* was ordered from Munich to go to Eszék in the company of a provisions officer and four musketeers, in order to organise the payment of his ransom from Ottoman territory.²⁵ Hasan, Ali and six other prisoners soon

¹⁸BHStA KA B. Türkenkriege 8. b. October 15, 1687.

¹⁹BHStA KA Handschrift No. 327. December 10, 1687, January 27, 1688.

²⁰BHStA KA B. Türkenkriege 8. b. October 15, 1687. The list is undated; it seems to have been drawn up several months later, when Peck had to account for the prisoners. The date that figures in the introduction (October 15, 1687) refers to the time of the prisoners' arrival from Munich to Pest.

²¹BHStA KA Handschrift No. 327. January 27, 1688.

²²Szakály, *op. cit.*, 176.

²³BHStA KA B. Türkenkriege 8. b. October 15, 1687; BHStA KA Handschrift No. 327. January 27, 1688.

²⁴Governor-general.

²⁵BHStA KA Handschrift No. 327. December 10, 1687.

left for Constantinople, where they had to collect the 9,250 golden florins²⁶ and negotiate the exchange of 69 Christian prisoners. Their companions remaining at Pest acted as guarantors, taking upon themselves their ransom.²⁷ Hasan returned with a mere 100 ducats and was accordingly bound up in irons at Pest, while Ali and his companions disappeared. Abdi *ağa* soon left Eszék, already suffering from dysentery. The quest for ransom which had seemed so promising in the beginning thus ended with a complete failure.²⁸

Peck was not a man to accept defeat patiently, however, and was determined to make good the damage caused to his reputation by the escape of his prisoners. As ransom was also urged for from the court of Munich, he turned to Ahmed, the pasha of Székesfehérvár, who had taken over the authority of the *beylerbeyi* of Buda, in order to settle the affair as quickly as possible. On two occasions, on May 15 and 20, 1688 he went to the pasha in person.²⁹ He could not have chosen a moment less propitious for his plans: on May 8 after a seven-month blockade, Ahmed came to terms with Ádám Batthyány, captain-general of the Transdanubian region and commander of the blockading forces, about the conditions of surrender. The official document was ratified on May 12 in Vienna and sent back to Székesfehérvár five days later. On May 19 the garrison, about 1,000 men, left the castle together with the civilian population and marched to the village of Adony on the Danube whence they were to float down on boats to Belgrade.³⁰ Under such circumstances Peck could hardly hope to achieve any success. Moreover, the conditions that he put forward on May 15 were far too harsh: in accordance with his orders from Munich he demanded 2,300 golden florins and the delivery of three Christian prisoners for the setting free of Abdi *ağa*. Ahmed responded that it was “impossible for them to ransom their brother Thiaja, for their villages had been destroyed four years earlier,³¹ their peasants had dispersed and could not be taxed any more.”

²⁶Guilder, ducat, Rhenish or German florin.

²⁷BHStA KA Handschrift No. 327. February 6, 1688.

²⁸*Ibid.*, January 27, 1688, August 26, 1688.

²⁹BHStA KA B. Türkenkriege 8. b. July 1, 1688.

³⁰Klára Hegyi – János J. Varga, *Székesfehérvár a török korban – Bécstől Székesfehérvárig* [Székesfehérvár in the Ottoman Era – From Vienna to Székesfehérvár]. (História klub füzetek, 5.) Székesfehérvár, 1989, 40.

³¹The region had been ravaged by war since 1684.

Even if they collected all the goods from the destroyed localities they would be unable to pay more than 300 golden florins. They asked for a month's delay and promised "upon their faith that as soon as the town and castle of Székesfehérvár are handed over to the Christians – to which they are compelled by the lack of supplies³² – and they get to Belgrade they will collect money in order to release Thiaja from his captivity."³³

The Turks of Székesfehérvár acted with surprising swiftness to fulfil their promise – at least in their own way. They seem to have sent a messenger to Süleyman, pasha of Belgrade, with whom they decided that two Hungarian market towns, Kecskemét and Nagykőrös, both belonging to the province of Buda, would have to pay to Peck for Abdi's release at Belgrade.³⁴ The money, completed with the ransom of Budaimla Mehmed, which amounted to 200 golden florins, would constitute their tax for the year 1688.³⁵ At the same time Süleyman engaged himself in writing to give back the 2,500 golden florins as soon as the towns handed over the money to the Elector's representatives at Pest and the two Ottoman officers returned "from the Christian camp."³⁶ In order to facilitate the transaction the pasha of Belgrade did not hesitate to lock up Mihály Böde, brother of the judge of Kecskemét, together with his companion, a well-to-do burgher of Nagykőrös, who had come to Belgrade to do business there.³⁷ Then he forced 12 of their fellow merchants to hand over the 2,500 golden florins. Already on May 20 he could make out the receipt, testifying that "...for this year of 1688 they have brought their tax to be paid according to the *defter* and handed it over in full at the treasury of the imperial (i.e. the sultan's) camp. Since no part of the aforementioned

³²We know from a letter of Ádám Batthyány, commander of the blockading forces, sent to Ahmed pasha on May 7, that the Ottoman garrison had long been starving then. Hegyi – Varga, *op. cit.*, 40.

³³BHStA KA B. Türkenkriege 8. b. July 1, 1688.

³⁴After the fall of Buda the functions of the treasury of Buda were taken by Székesfehérvár, then, after the latter's capitulation, by Belgrade; for the *vilayet* of Buda extended southwards as far as the Serbian border.

³⁵BHStA KA B. Türkenkriege 8. b. July 1, 1688. Áron Szilády – Sándor Szilágyi, *Okmánytár a hódoltság történetéhez Magyarországon* [Archive on the History of Ottoman Rule in Hungary]. II. Pest, 1863, 166.

³⁶Szilády – Szilágyi, *op. cit.*, 166.

³⁷BHStA KA B. Türkenkriege 8. b. July 1, 1688. János Hornyik, *Kecskemét város története oklevéltárral* [The History of the Town of Kecskemét with a Collection of Documents]. III. Kecskemét, 1862, 188.

tax was left unpaid, this receipt was given to them so as to protect them from all further trouble and from having to pay their tax again..."³⁸ Then he told the two towns that he would not set his hostages free until the burghers redeemed the two Turkish prisoners and took them to Belgrade. What could Kecskemét and Nagykőrös do? They paid, first to the Ottomans for the Ottomans, then to the Germans for the Ottomans.

It was now Peck's turn again. He summoned the envoys of the two towns and asked them if they were willing to pay 2,300 ducats and exchange three Christian prisoners for Abdi ağa, as the Ottomans of Belgrade had demanded, and thereby liberate their two fellow-burghers. The envoys bluntly refused, however, for the Emperor Leopold I (1658–1705)³⁹ had ordered them not to pay more than "a few *grossi* of tax or vassalic aid to the Ottoman emperor by way of their arrears and their future tax". If, therefore, "His Imperial Majesty is not able to pay a mere trifle in connection with such a large-scale transaction", they argued with a diplomatic skill that had been refined by 150 years of Ottoman rule, "not the smallest reparation is possible on their part". Peck now deployed the whole arsenal of his persuasion. At first he tried to appeal to the burghers' Christian solidarity, hoping that they would prove their concern "for two of their fellow-peasants whom they allowed to be locked up and battered by the cruel Ottomans" and would redeem them "from this torture". Then he alluded to the changing fortunes of war, saying that if "the Ottoman army somehow happened to get the upper hand this year or in the next one", and re-conquer the two towns, they would surely "not want to get into prison and be deprived of their fortunes as it had happened to their fellow-burghers." He rounded off his arguments with a menace: they'd better pay the ransom, "lest His Majesty the Prince Elector be compelled to take certain measures against them during the transaction".⁴⁰

Peck's arguments did have the desired effect. He managed to persuade the envoys of the towns to liberate three Christian prisoners and to sign a bond on June 22, 1688 in which they were "willing to prove, swearing upon their life, that everything had been forged by the Ottomans and that

³⁸Szilády – Szilágyi, *op. cit.*, 166–167. Hornyik, *op. cit.*, 187.

³⁹Leopold I (of Habsburg), Holy Roman Emperor (1658–1705), King of Hungary (1657–1705).

⁴⁰BHStA KA B. Türkenkriege 8. b. July 1, 1688.

their tax to the latter never amounted to more than 1,000 imperial *thalers*...⁴¹ Nevertheless, in order to redeem their fellows from the terrible sufferings to which they are exposed at Belgrade, and to preserve their properties if (which God avert) the Ottomans got the upper hand again, and also to avoid imprisonment and expulsion from their homeland, they engage themselves to pay the ransom of Thiaja pasha and of his servant,⁴² with all the costs incurred so far,⁴³ that is, 2,000 ducats, which they would collect at Kecskemét and Nagykőrös by going from house to house” and then pay “to His Majesty the Prince Elector” in four instalments of 500 ducats, the first instalment being due in June. The bond also stipulated that if its signatories – István Király,⁴⁴ István Szőnyi, and the notary István Gyomali from Kecskemét, judge Ferenc Karai, Márton Soros, the juror József Pap, and the notary György Pázmány from Nagykőrös – refused to keep their promise, Maximilian Emmanuel would be allowed to recoup himself from their properties. For the sake of even greater authenticity they all swore a solemn oath in the presence of major-general Melchior Leopold Beck, captain of Buda,⁴⁵ and of Franz Heinrich von Rentzing,⁴⁶ imperial quartermaster-general.⁴⁷

⁴¹Since one imperial *thaler* was worth about 2 Rhenish florins at the end of the seventeenth century, their tax amounted to some 2,000 Rhenish florins. Szilády – Szilágyi, *op. cit.*, 161; Péter Bán, *Magyar történeti fogalomgyűjtemény* [Hungarian Historical Dictionary]. II. Eger, 1980, 734.

⁴²Some of the documents speak about three servants, others mentioning only one. We based our narrative upon Peck’s list which refers to October 15, 1687. BHStA KA B. Türkenkriege 8. b. June 22, 1688, July 1, 1688.

⁴³The pasha received 2 florins a week and one portion (that is, 1 kg) of bread a day. BHStA KA Handschrift No. 327. December 10, 1687.

⁴⁴In 1691, he is referred to as judge of Kecskemét. Tibor Iványosi-Szabó, *A kecskeméti magisztrátus jegyzőkönyveinek töredékei (1591–1711)* [Fragments of the Records of the Magistracy of Kecskemét]. I. Kecskemét, 1996, 222.

⁴⁵He was appointed by Charles of Lorraine after the fall of Buda and confirmed in his office by the Council of War of Vienna on September 15, 1686. György Bánrévi, “Az első hivatalos intézkedések visszafoglalt Budán [The First Official Measures in the Recaptured City of Buda],” in *Tanulmányok Budapest Múltjából* [Studies on the History of Budapest]. V. Budapest, 1936, 244.

⁴⁶Knight of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. He held the office of imperial quartermaster-general from December 14, 1686 to March 3, 1689. Hornyik, *op. cit.*, 181.

⁴⁷The agreement was reconstructed on the basis of the bond itself and of the report that was sent to Munich by Peck on July 1, 1688. BHStA KA B. Türkenkriege 8. b. June 22, 1688, July 1, 1688. A copy of the bond in German was sent to the town of Nagykőrös.

At that time Kecskemét and Nagykőrös were considered as the two wealthiest market towns in Pest county, which had recently been liberated from the Ottoman rule. Both the imperial army and the Ottoman troops, in constant retreat towards Belgrade and the southern frontiers of the country, regarded them as part of their provisioning area. Whereas the Christians, already preparing themselves for the siege of Belgrade after the victorious battle of Nagyharsány (August 12, 1687), demanded military service from them, the Turkish and Tatar marauders were still able to set them to ransom. The burghers, living under temporary military and administrative conditions, tried therefore to “muddle through” while serving two lords at one and the same time. On October 7, 1686 they sent a tax of 501 *thalers* to Sultan Mehmed IV (1648–1687).⁴⁸ At the end of the year they received a letter from Ahmed from Székesfehérvár who as “vizier of Buda” demanded the gift that was due to him. The two towns sent István Király⁴⁹ and János Bali with an excuse to the pasha who, when seeing the envoys arrive empty-handed, refused to talk to them, locked them up in chains and kept them in stocks out in the frost, deprived of both food and drink. He told the people of Nagykőrös and Kecskemét that if his demands were not met within a week he would impale their envoys. The two towns of course did everything in order to redeem their burghers and complied with the pasha’s demand. By way of a gift originally to be discharged in kind the town of Kecskemét paid 384 *thalers*, 41 golden pieces and half a Hungarian florin.⁵⁰ It was also at that time that major-general Beck sent an open letter to the localities around

Szilády – Szilágyi, *op. cit.*, 168. The agreement was preceded by an awkward intermezzo. We know from a letter of Griennagl, written on June 25 at Esztergom, that the envoys of the towns, unwilling to carry the financial burden involved in the redemption of the pasha, tried to bribe the imperial officers. The affair was unveiled, however, which was all grist to Peck’s mill during the preparation of the agreement. Moreover, he ordered that the two hostages at Belgrade should present themselves before lieutenant general Peck and the newly appointed judge of Pest, Johann Valentin Knipper, immediately after their liberation. BHStA KA Handschrift No. 327. On Knipper’s appointment, see *Források Buda, Pest és Óbuda történetéhez 1686–1873* [Historical Sources Relating to the History of Buda, Pest, and Óbuda]. (Források Budapest Múltjából, 1.) Ed. by Vera Bácskai. Budapest, 1971, 125.

⁴⁸Hornyik, *op. cit.*, 171.

⁴⁹He was elected as judge of Kecskemét in 1691 and 1697. Iványosi-Szabó, *op. cit.*, 222.

⁵⁰Hornyik, *op. cit.*, 171–172.

Buda, ordering that “all the taxes and services that had so far been rendered to the Ottomans should henceforth be made to Buda” and that all relations with the Ottomans should be suspended immediately on pain of death.⁵¹ Yet it was extremely difficult (if not strictly impossible) to act in accordance with the general’s order when the pasha of Belgrade regularly summoned the towns’ leaders “for a discussion”, for tax-paying or for an “examen”, like István Király, whom we had seen suffering in stocks at Székesfehérvár, and who was fated to go to Belgrade in March 1688: “When lately I was before the commander-in-chief, brought to a terrible inquiry, that if Turkish, Serb or Tatar goods and cattle are found with any one of the townspeople, the commander promised upon his Muslim faith that manslaughter, plunder, arson and complete ruin would be our fate.”⁵² In view of these conditions it is no matter for surprise that the Ottoman military and civil administration, shaken in its very foundations, should have tried to have access to the tax that had previously been collected legally, be it on the pretext of exchanging prisoners.

Yet Kecskemét and Nagykőrös, “liberated” from the Ottoman rule, also paid taxes to their liberator, the Habsburg king, as it had been customary within the highly specific Hungarian conditions.⁵³ By far the heaviest burden was the military contribution, paid to the Court Chamber of Vienna in cash or in the form of services (billeting and provisioning, transport). The contribution of Kecskemét amounted to 36,499 florins in 1687 and to 25,000 in 1688.⁵⁴ It was completed at the turn of 1687–88 by a “long transport” which was ordered by Charles of Lorraine: the two market towns had to furnish 60 waggons and 240 oxen (4 for each wagon) in order to carry the Ottoman garrison of the castle of Eger (delivered on December 17, 1687) to Debrecen. Kecskemét lost 30 waggons and 100 oxen, Nagykőrös 20 waggons due to the terrible condition of the

⁵¹*Ibid.*, 171 and 186. The inhabitants of Kecskemét and Nagykőrös did not comply with the order and continued to trade on Ottoman territory, which led to Mihály Böde’s (and his companion’s) being captured by the pasha of Belgrade.

⁵²Hornyik, *op. cit.*, 170, 187. Iványosi-Szabó, *op. cit.*, 133.

⁵³On the problem of double taxing, see Ferenc Szakály, *Magyar adóztatás a török hódoltságban* [Hungarian Taxation in the Ottoman-Ruled Territories]. Budapest, 1981.

⁵⁴Hornyik, *op. cit.*, 182.

roads.⁵⁵ Due to their “economic ruin” both of the market towns saw the number of their taxable holdings diminished by the Supervisory Board of the Chamber of Buda which was subordinated to the Chamber of Vienna.⁵⁶ Yet it did not prevent the Chamber from extorting 28,752 florins from their inhabitants in the next year.⁵⁷

We may admire the endurance and vitality demonstrated by the two towns; after all, they were paying double taxes and being threatened by both sides. Besides their manifold obligations they also carried out their engagement of June 22, 1688. On June 30, they paid the first instalment of 500 golden florins and handed over the three Christian prisoners delivered from Ottoman captivity: Jakob Schweindl, a hunter who had previously served in the regiment of count János Károly Serényi, Jakob Peischl, a cavalryman from the regiment of General Johann Heinrich Dünnewald and Hans Prichta, a musketeer from the Lorraine regiment.⁵⁸ From July 2 on they paid a further 1,000 ducats in two instalments to commissary Peck.⁵⁹ Now it was decided in Munich that Abdi *ağa* could leave the round bastion of Pest and collect the missing 500 golden florins personally at Kecskemét and Nagykőrös.⁶⁰ Abdi, assisted by the local judges themselves, seems to have obtained what he came for, for on September 19 he made out two vouchers: in one of them he acknowledged that the two market towns had redeemed him from the Bavarians and thereby discharged their tax for the year 1688. In the other he promised upon his faith that as soon as he got to Belgrade he would intercede for the delivery of Mihály Böde who had been imprisoned on his behalf.⁶¹ When the *kethüda* finally arrived Süleyman pasha paid back 2,300 ducats accompanied by a written statement. But he refused to

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 183–184. András Borosy, *Pest–Pilis–Solt vármegye közgyűlési jegyzőkönyveinek regesztái 1638–1711* [Abstracts from the Protocols of the Congregations of Pest–Pilis–Solt County]. III: 1681–1697. Budapest, 1985, 61–62.

⁵⁶Borosy, *op. cit.*, 62, 71.

⁵⁷Hornyik, *op. cit.*, 182. We do not even mention the so-called house tax which was collected on a multitude of pretexts from those liable to taxes: for the travelling expenses of envoys, for the solemn reception of Palatine Pál Esterházy, or simply “for the necessities of the county”. Borosy, *op. cit.*, 61, 66–67, 74.

⁵⁸BHStA KA B. Türkenkriege 8. b. July 1, 1688.

⁵⁹Hornyik, *op. cit.*, 188–189. Szilády – Szilágyi, *op. cit.*, 163, 172.

⁶⁰BHStA KA Handschrift No. 327. February 4, 1689.

⁶¹Hornyik, *op. cit.*, 189. Nagykőrös must have received similar vouchers but they seem to have fallen victim to the destruction suffered by the municipal archives in 1945.

transfer the remaining 200 since Budaimla Mehmed, whose redemption had also been promised by the two towns, was still in Peck's captivity.⁶²

Two of Abdi *ağa*'s fellow-prisoners were set free a couple of weeks later. It was sometime around June 22, that the envoys of Kecskemét and Nagykőrös had informally promised to Peck to redeem them as well: they had engaged themselves to pay the 100-ducat ransom of Lami *efendi* and deliver a Christian prisoner, while for Hasan pasha they had immediately put down 100 golden florins and promised to redeem another Christian prisoner. As for Budaimla Mehmed, they had promised to give 100 golden florins and a prisoner for him as soon as he arrived home.⁶³ We do not know how these prisoners were finally set free but it is at least clear that the *efendi* was redeemed neither by Kecskemét nor by Nagykőrös: the 100 ducats and the Christian prisoner were sent by another market town, Halas, sometime during October and November. The Christian prisoner and a further 100 ducats that had been stipulated for the delivery of Hasan were likewise handed over by the inhabitants of Halas.⁶⁴ What happened to Budaimla Mehmed is not known and we also lose sight of Abdi *ağa* on the way to Constantinople.

The fate of the 38 Turkish prisoners remaining at Pest was different. When it became evident that they were making schemes for their escape instead of making preparations for the collection of their ransom, they were all ordered back to Munich. It was again Griennagl, the Elector's bodyguard, who appeared in Peck's office and embarked the prisoners, all in chains, on a six-oar barge.⁶⁵ On June 24 they left Pest. A violent windstorm compelled them to stop for three days between Esztergom and Pozsony, during which they took care of those among them who had been "terribly flogged" by Peck after the aborted attempt to escape. One of them died from his wounds at Győr,⁶⁶ thereby increasing the number of dead to six.

Manpower was much needed at Schleissheim, where the construction of the park was underway under the direction of master Zuccali who had just returned from his trip to Paris. In the next year the prisoners were put

⁶²Szilády – Szilágyi, *op. cit.*, 167–168.

⁶³BHStA KA B. Türkenkriege 8. b. July 1, 1688.

⁶⁴BHStA KA Handschrift No. 327. November 26, 1688.

⁶⁵BHStA KA B. Türkenkriege 8. b. October 15, 1687, July 1, 1688.

⁶⁶BHStA KA Handschrift No. 327. June 25, 1688, July 2, 1688.

to work on the canals upon which the members of the court were to amuse themselves in their Venetian gondolas. The first ditch took the water of a small stream called Schwabinger to the castle of Lustheim some 13 kilometres further away. Somewhat later another stream, the Würm, which runs parallel to the Isar, was also connected to the system at Lustheim. The third ditch led from Lustheim to Dachau across the Würm.⁶⁷

Having completed the system of canals Zuccali prepared the plans of the Versailles-like Neues Schloss in 1693. The construction of the castle began in 1701 under the direction of Philipp Zwerger and went on until 1704 when the unmortared building was completed.⁶⁸ In the meantime the envoys of Emperor Leopold I and of Sultan Mustafa II (1695–1703) had signed the Peace of Karlowitz (January 26, 1699) which finally made possible the exchange of the Christian and Ottoman prisoners. Maximilian Emmanuel also consented to his prisoners' liberation. The 36 "Turkish slaves" who are known to have remained in Munich by 1700⁶⁹ may also have heard about the Elector's plan to decorate the Victoria-hall of the Neues Schloss with monumental paintings that would commemorate the events of the Hungarian campaign.

Above the paintings Latin verses were to proclaim the Elector's victories over the Ottomans. The inscription accompanying the siege of Buda is as follows (with a clear allusion to the attack against the great round bastion and the Palace): "The lightning of war is called Emmanuel. Even Mars himself turns pale before him when he crushes rocks and mountains with his heavy canons." The crossing of the river Sava at Belgrade which had been carried out before the eyes of the Ottoman army itself was so commented on: "To jump over the river after the Goddess of Victory – you proceed with steps like this, Maximilian."⁷⁰

It is probable that by the time the precious paintings were completed all the prisoners who had worked on the castle, the canals and in the manufactures had left Munich, following "Thiaja" pasha, Lami *efendi* and the others to the Ottoman Empire.

⁶⁷Hojer, *Schleissheim*, 14, 16, 27. Hüttl, *Max Emanuel*, 156.

⁶⁸Hojer, *op. cit.*, 16–17.

⁶⁹Hüttl, *op. cit.*, 157

⁷⁰Varga, *op. cit.*, 175–176.

MANUMITTED MALE SLAVES AT GALATA AND ISTANBUL AROUND 1700

GÉZA DÁVID

In a previous article, I presented a survey of a group of female slaves emancipated after the Peace of Karlowitz.¹ The material used on that occasion contains data on men as well. This information will be considered here, and an attempt made to establish the possible differences regarding the two sexes as far as price, owners and other characteristics are concerned.

Here it should be stated that not long after the above peace treaty signed in 1699, Wolfgang von Öttingen, Austria's ambassador to the Sublime Porte, and Adolph von Sinzendorf, the official charged with this particular matter,² must have requested – in accordance with the provisions of the treaty³ – that the Ottoman authorities hand over Christian captives and slaves they were holding, especially those from Habsburg territories.

Although the response to this request is unknown, certain entries in the *mühimme defteri* for the years H. 1110–1113/1698–1701 are illuminating.⁴ Covering the period July 30 – September 23, 1700, these documents are, as far as I know, the first of their kind.⁵ They show that partly as a result of the agreement concluded by the Ottoman envoy in Vienna on July 26, 1700,⁶

¹See: “Manumitted Female Slaves at Galata and Istanbul around 1700,” in *Frauen, Bilder und Gelehrte. Studien zu Gesellschaft und Künsten im Osmanischen Reich. Arts, Women and Scholars. Studies in Ottoman Society and Culture. Festschrift Hans Georg Majer*. Hrsg. von / Ed. by Sabine Prätor and Christoph K. Neumann. İstanbul, 2002, 229–236.

²Joseph von Hammer, *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches*. VII. Pest, 1831, 19.

³See – among others – Defterdar Sarı Mehmed Paşa, *Zübde-i vekayiât. Tahlil ve metin (1066–1116 / 1656–1704)*. Ed. by Abdülkadir Özcan. Ankara, 1995, 658–659.

⁴BOA MD 111.

⁵The material containing certificates of manumission that was published by Jahn begins with 1702 and ends with 1776. Cf. Karl Jahn, *Türkische Freilassungserklärungen des 18. Jahrhunderts (1702–1776)*. Napoli, 1963. – Hammer maintains that Sinzendorf's “Leichnam wurde mit den Gefangenen, die er befreyt, nach Wien gesandt” (*op. cit.*, 20). I assume that he was referring to another, earlier, group of returning manumitted captives and not those mentioned in the Turkish source.

⁶Otto Spies, “Schicksale türkischer Kriegsgefangener in Deutschland nach den Türkenkriegen,” in *Festschrift Werner Caschel zum siebzigsten Geburtstag 5. März 1966*. Hrsg. von Erwin Graf. Leiden, 1968, 319–320.

quite serious attempts were made to find the European captives in various parts of the Ottoman capital, its adjacent settlements and even elsewhere in the Empire. The task of discovering these captives probably fell to the Austrians in the main, and required the goodwill and even the co-operation of the Ottoman authorities. As a result, 13 persons in the prison of the galley-slaves (*zindan-i tersane*)⁷ and 63 males serving in the imperial galleys⁸ (*kalyonha-i mirî*) were identified, plus, after renewed intervention, another 14 prisoners.⁹ The nationality of most of these “public captives” was indicated as *Nemçe* i.e. Austrian, there being just a few Venetians, Dutchmen and Frenchmen among them. Needless to say, all were males. The laconic records give their often distorted or illegible names and trades, which were carpenter, baker, workman, and *marinar*, as well as other less clear designations.

In addition, a number of slaves could be found in private ownership. These were already “in the hands of the Austrian ambassador” when the sultan ordered that an investigation be performed as to whether any had in the meantime converted to Islam, in which case they should not be given back. The enquiry was conducted, although no paragraph stipulating such a procedure featured in the treaty (one was added only in 1719).¹⁰ Three

⁷For this term, see İdris Bostan, *Osmanlı bahriye teşkilatı: XVII. yüzyılda Tersâne-i Âmirre*. Ankara, 1992, 11–13.

⁸The ships on which they had been employed were also specified individually. Nine men were discovered on the new *kalyon* of the admiral (*kapudane*) of the flotilla. Six persons had been on the vessel of Captain Bastardya (?) Elhac ..., two on that of Captain ... Hacı Mehmed, three on that of Captain Mustafa, five on that of Captain Seyid Mustafa, five on that of Captain Canum Hoca Mehmed, one on that of ... Ahmed *çavuş*, three on that of Captain Bayram, one on that of Captain Deli Balta Ahmed, five on that of Captain Balıkçızade Mehmed, two on that of Captain Rodoslı Mehmed, four on that of Captain Tara...cı Hüseyin, two on that of Ömer Hoca, two on that of Captain Mara.t Hüseyin, eight on that of Captain Mukri (?) zade Hacı Hüseyin, two on that of Captain Futa (?) Ali and two on those of ... Sinan. (In all likelihood this very same list is referred to by Bostan, *op. cit.*, 209: note 197, but with the earlier page numbering of the *defter*.) – For the composition of oarsmen on warships of the contending powers in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, see: Maurice Aymard, “Chiourmes et galères dans la seconde moitié du XVI^e siècle,” in *Il Mediterraneo nella seconda metà del ‘500 alla luce di Lepanto*. A cura di Gino Benzoni. Firenze, 1974, 85–86.

⁹MD 111, pp. 738–740: Nos. 2528–2529. (Note that the numbering of entries is incorrect.)

¹⁰Karl Jahn, “Zum Loskauf christlicher und türkischer Gefangener und Sklaven im 18. Jahrhundert,” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 111:1 (1961) 67.

subsequent lists were prepared.¹¹ On these there were 86 names, most of them different. Nine of these persons – six of them males – turned out to be apostates,¹² with the result that they were retained. Of the entries, 38 pertain to men and 48 to women, although three names occur repeatedly, which makes a total of 45 freed females.

Following more or less the same pattern, each entry contains some basic data about the individual concerned, specifically his/her place of abode within the Ottoman Empire, the name of his/her owner, his/her original nationality, the date of his/her release from slavery, the redemption fee that was paid for him/her, and the law-court that issued the *hüccet* (or other document) testifying to the legal validity of the manumission.¹³ The present analysis of the material follows the same pattern as that used in my paper on the women.

1. The owners', and consequently the slaves', place of abode shows the following distribution:

Table 1
Place of abode of freed male slaves

	Galata and its environs	Istanbul and its environs	Edirne	Others or unknown	Total
List I	–	5	–	4	9
List II	6	12	2	5	25
List III	1	3	–	–	4
Total	7	20	2	9	38

In contrast to the women, most of whom lived in Galata and its vicinity, the highest number of male slaves could be collected in Istanbul itself. They came from various districts within the huge city, and only twice

¹¹MD 111, pp. 740–743, 743–748, 750–751; strangely enough, the chronological order is awry.

¹²Although some of the women (or their fathers) had Muslim names, they were not counted among the converts.

¹³Unfortunately the personal details, recorded in their *pencik* (cf. Jahn, “Zum Loskauf,” 69 and note 13), were not repeated in the entries, thus they are the bare bones of ordinary certificates of manumission published by Jahn.

were there any two manumitted slaves from the same quarter. The clearly specified locations were as follows: the Sarı Gürz or Kirez *mahallesi*,¹⁴ the vicinity of the noble Bali paşa mosque,¹⁵ the Kalenderhane *mahallesi*,¹⁶ the area around the Laleli çeşme,¹⁷ the environs of the *Darphane*, the Koca Mustafa paşa *mahallesi*,¹⁸ the Müfti Ali Çelebi *mahallesi*,¹⁹ the neighbourhood of the Avcılar *mescidi*,²⁰ the Karabağ *mahallesi* near the Fener Kapu,²¹ the Ayvansarı *mahallesi*,²² the Kasab Timur han *mahallesi*,²³ Balat, the Hubyar *mahallesi*,²⁴ and the Mesih paşa *mahallesi*.²⁵ Three owners lived in *hans*; one in the Vezir *hanı* in the centre of the town, the other in the Valide *hanı*,²⁶ the third in the Mahmud paşa *hanı* (?).²⁷ Three males feature alongside the occupations of their former masters: one had belonged to a sea captain, another to the *mevkufatî* Yusuf Efendi (who must have resided in Istanbul) and the third

¹⁴No *mahalle* with such a designation figures in the register of pious foundations from 1546. Cf. Ömer Lutfi Barkan – Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi, *İstanbul vakıfları tahrîr defteri. 953 (1546) târîhli.* (İstanbul Fetih Cemiyeti İstanbul Enstitüsü, 61.) İstanbul, 1970. Evliya Çelebi, however, mentions a Sarıkires *cami*, a Sarıkirez graveyard and also a Sankirez bath in Istanbul, the location of which, though, is difficult to identify; see Evliya Çelebi b. Derviş Muhammed Zillî, *Evliya Çelebi seyahatnâmesi.* Topkapı Sarayı Bağdat 304 yazmasının transkripsiyonu-dizini. I. Kitap: İstanbul. Ed. by Orhan Şaik Gökyay. İstanbul, 1996, 128, 137, 154, 156. It cannot be excluded that the name later transmuted into Sargüzel, a district located south-west of the Fatih complex. Cf. Mübahat S. Kütükoğlu, *1869'da faal İstanbul medreseleri.* İstanbul, 1977, 110: No. 133.

¹⁵Cf. Barkan – Ayverdi, *op. cit.*, 216: No. 1254 and note 1; Evliya Çelebi, *op. cit.*, I. 128.

¹⁶A district formed around the *cami* of the same name.

¹⁷Cf. Evliya Çelebi, *op. cit.*, I. 136.

¹⁸A district in the south-western part of Old Istanbul.

¹⁹Cf. Barkan – Ayverdi, *op. cit.*, 270: note 1.

²⁰I could not identify this building.

²¹This gate is mentioned by Evliya Çelebi several times (cf. the index of volume I); the district, however, is not.

²²This figures in the same form in Evliya Çelebi's description (see the index of volume I), and is identical with modern Ayvansaray, in the north-eastern corner of Old Istanbul.

²³I could not identify this district.

²⁴Cf. Barkan – Ayverdi, *op. cit.*, 62 and note 1.

²⁵Cf. Barkan – Ayverdi, *op. cit.*, 147: No. 799 and note 2.

²⁶Cf. Evliya Çelebi, *op. cit.*, I. 134.

²⁷The deciphering of the last word is somewhat problematic; one would be inclined to read it as *hanına* although *hanında* would be better here. However, the correct spelling should perhaps be *canibinde*.

to the *mütevelli* of the *cami* of Sultan Mehmed II (with an abode in Istanbul).

The seven persons from Galata and its adjacent areas indicate six different places of abode: the Arab or Azab *iskelesi*²⁸ in the vicinity of Beşiktaş, the Muidzade *mahallesi*²⁹ outside Galata, the Elhac Hasan *mahallesi* in Kasım paşa, the İlyas Çelebi *mahallesi* in Tophane,³⁰ the Ebulfazl *mahallesi* also in Tophane,³¹ and the vicinity of the *Mevlevihane* outside Galata.

Of the two individuals found as slaves in Edirne, only one is specified together with a *mahalle*, namely that of Sıkca Murad.³²

The group “Others” contains two persons who had been in the service of the French consul – a certain “Ayto” – in Gallipoli. Of those in this batch, one man had lived in the *kaza* of Akyazı in Anatolia,³³ another in the village of Masuhak in the *kaza* of Karaca Viran, similarly in Anatolia;³⁴ one man came from Gegbuze (which belonged to Üsküdar), one

²⁸I could not find such a landing place in the given region. We know, however, that European ships usually tied up between Azapkapı and Tophane (see Robert Mantran, *17. yüzyılın ikinci yarısında İstanbul. Kurumsal, iktisadi, toplumsal tarih denemesi*. I. Ankara, 1986, 94). It should be added that the *iskele-i Bab-i Azab* was sometimes spelt – clearly out of negligence – Arab in 1640 (cf. Mübahat S. Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlılarda narh müessesesi ve 1640 tarihli narh defteri*. İstanbul, 1983, 335–336).

²⁹I could not find a matching district. A certain Muidzade Mesud Efendi living in the seventeenth century is mentioned by Mehmed Süreyya (*Sicill-i Osmanî*, 4. [Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 30.] Ed. by Nuri Akbayar. Transliteration by Seyit Ali Kahraman. [İstanbul, 1996], 1089). His name may later have been preserved as a toponym.

³⁰I could not identify either the previous or this district.

³¹A *cami* of this name is referred to by Evliya Çelebi: *Tophane karhanesi ensesinde ... bir bayır başında* (*op. cit.*, I. 188).

³²The first part of this central district of the town was written Sipkinci in 1528–1529 but Sıkça in 1610 and also later. Cf. M. Tayyib, Gökbiçgin, *XV–XVI. asırlarda Edirne ve Paşa livası. Vakıflar–mülkler–mukataalar*. İstanbul, 1952, 39.

³³A judicial district of this name is mentioned in 1675 together with Yarhisar, Bergama, and Kızılca Tuzla. According to the editors it belonged to the *sancak* of Kocaeli. Cf. *Das osmanische “Registerbuch der Beschwerden” (şikâyet defteri) vom Jahre 1675*. Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Cod. mixt. 683. Hrsg. ... von Hans Georg Majer. Wien, 1984, 33 and fol. 8a/6. It is located south of Lake Sapanca.

³⁴Although a rather popular place-name, this must be identical with the one situated in the *sancak* of Kangırı and referred to as the centre of a judicial district in 1675. Cf. Majer, *op. cit.*, 43 and fols. 37a/4, 86b/4. – The village could not be identified; it does not figure among the settlements of this administrative unit in 1530. Cf. *438 numaralı muhâsebe-i vilâyet-i Anadolu defteri. (937/1530)*. II. *Bolu, Kastamonu, Kengiri ve Koca-ili livaları*. (T.C. Başbakanlık Dev-

from the Topçılar *mahallesi*³⁵ in the town (*medine*) of Eyüb, and one from Eyüb, with no indication of district there.

It should be added that the act of manumission was not necessarily performed by a law-court in the district where the individual in question had been dwelling. For example, in the case of one of the slaves of the French consul, the *kadı* of Lapseki, on the other side of the Dardanelles, issued the *hüccet*, while the *mahkeme* of Galata dealt with a number of cases relating to individuals in different parts of Istanbul or Eyüp that definitely had their own *kadı* seats. On one occasion “the *kadı* of the imperial army” prepared the official document. The Hungarian apostate living in Gebze, which in principle belonged to Üsküdar, received his certificate of manumission from the *naib* of the “Adalar *nahiyesi*” i.e. from the deputy judge of the Islands. With regard to the preponderance of such documents issued by the Galata law-court, the proximity of the Austrian embassy can be an explanation; the other irregularities are more difficult to interpret.

2. The nationality of the manumitted men as stated in the original documentation is given in Table 2 below.

Table 2
The origins of freed male slaves

	Austrian	Hungarian	Serb	Vlach	Russian	Slovenian
List I	4	2	1	–	1	1
List II	11	8	4	2	–	–
List III	2	–	1	1	–	–
Total	17	10	6	3	1	1

It is not surprising that the largest number of men freed were classified as *Nemçe*, followed by the Hungarians and Serbs. The few Vlachs and the single Russian were freed perhaps as a result of the negotiations in

let Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, Osmanlı Arşivi Daire Başkanlığı, Yayın Nu. 20. Defter-i hâkânî dizisi, I.) Ankara, 1994.

³⁵Another earlier variant of the modern Gebze was Gekbizî as read by the editors. Cf. Evliya Çelebi, *op. cit.*, I. 376. The latter is located south-west of the central parts of Eyüp.

Vienna.³⁶ If we compare the indications of origin with the (often scarcely legible) names of the individuals, a number of contradictions can be observed.³⁷ In part this means that the individuals in question did not attach much importance to distinguishing between their country of origin and their ethnic/national background, and that the Ottoman authorities were similarly indifferent to the making of such a distinction.

3. The slaves' former owners, all of them men, can be classified according to their religion (Muslim or non-Muslim).

Table 3
Former masters of the freed male slaves

	Muslim	Non-Muslim
List I	7	2
List II	22	3
List III	2	2
Total	31	7

It is clear that in the case of these manumitted male slaves, the overwhelming majority of the former owners had been Muslims. The few who had belonged to non-Muslim masters served in the households of, respectively, the abovementioned French consul, a Greek, two Armenians, a Flemish merchant, and a *zimmi* whose name could not be deciphered. This is in sharp contrast to the case of the women, who had been held more by Christians and Jews than by Muslims, in what can be interpreted as a form of protection.

That several Muslim proprietors belonged to the more-or-less well-to-do layers of Ottoman society is also conspicuous. Represented among these layers are the military (e.g. Abdülbaki *ağa*, the former *kul kethüdası* Ömer *ağa*, Elhac İsa *reis*, the former sea-captain Hacı Hasan *bey*, Abdülaziz *beşe*, Ahmedpaşaoğlu Mehmed *bey*, and the former *muhzır* Hacı Veli *ağa*), officialdom (Çolak Mehmed *yazıcı*, *mukataacı* İbrahim *efendi*, *mevkufatî* Yusuf *efendi*, and the *mütevelli* of the *cami* of Mehmed II

³⁶Cf. Jahn, "Zum Loskauf," 67.

³⁷E.g. "Karad *veled-i* Covan – *Nemçe*"; "Hatni *veled-i* Marında – *Nemçe*", etc. Jahn had a similar impression: *Türkische Freilassungserklärungen*, 18–19.

Abdullah *ağa*), the intelligentsia (Ramazan *efendi*, Mehemmed *efendi*, Hüseyin *çelebi*, and Çobanoğlu Mustafa *çelebi*), and persons who had probably performed the Pilgrimage (e.g. Elhac Abidin and his brother, Hacı Hasan, Elhac Hasan, and Hacı Mehmed). It is worth noting that a scion of the Crimean khans, Sultan Hüsam Giray, son of Feth Giray I (1596)³⁸ also possessed a European slave.

4. The last point is a survey of the sums demanded for the slaves by Muslim and non-Muslim owners respectively.

Table 4
Sums paid for the manumission of the male slaves

Sum paid (<i>guruş</i>)	Muslim owner	Non-Muslim owner	Total
Gratis	–	5	5
1–30	–	–	–
31–50	–	1	1
51–60	6	–	6
61–70	8	–	8
71–80	2	1	3
81–90	1	–	1
91–100	2	–	2
100 +	2	–	2
Uncertain	10 ³⁹	–	10
Total	31	7	38

³⁸I am grateful to Mária Ivanics for information, based on documents in the Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Vienna, on this person, who can be detected in 1667 and 1668 in Crimean–Habsburg correspondence, from which it is also clear that he was neither the *kalga*, nor the *nuredin* at that time.

³⁹On one occasion the fee is given as 24,000 *akçe*, the equivalent of which was approximately 200 *guruş*.

We can say that the typical fee for a man was between 50 and 70 *guruş* if he happened to be in the possession of a Muslim, while most of the non-Muslim owners liberated their slaves free of charge. This is another significant element in comparison with the women, where no clear tendency in the prices paid for manumission could be discerned.

The top “ransom” reached 250 *guruş*, but this was for a whole family: the Austrian “Mihal son of Mihad and his wife Marina and their underage sons Kostantin and Fransızko”.

In comparison to later periods, even the highest sums on our list are modest, since often significantly more had to be paid, e.g. 300–500 *guruş* for a male in and after 1734.⁴⁰

In the group designated “Uncertain”, we find an interesting case, namely an attempt at an exchange. An Austrian *gulam* was to be exchanged for a *sipahi* from Gegbuze (Gebze) “imprisoned in the castle of Segedin [i.e. Szeged]” or for a certain Halil *beşe* from among the “*kırk bölük*” unit, or “if they had died or been freed in one way or another, then for the release of another captive”.

As regards the dates of the manumission certificates, most were written in Muharrem–Rebiülahir 1112 (i.e. July–September 1700). Two of the rare exceptions, five altogether, concern persons outside Istanbul: the Russian Yovan bin Abdullah from the *kaza* of Akyazı was freed in 1095/1683–1684, while the Hungarian Yusuf bin Abdullah from the village of Masuhak received his *hüccet* in 1100/1688–1689.

Unfortunately, we are not in the position to follow up the return of the manumitted males to their original places of abode. We can only hope that they were able to make their way back to their native lands, towns or villages, and families.

⁴⁰Jahn, *Türkische Freilassungserklärungen*, passim.

ENSLAVEMENT, SLAVE LABOUR AND THE TREATMENT OF CAPTIVES IN THE CRIMEAN KHANATE

MÁRIA IVANICS

The Crimean Tatars founded a state in a region that had been an area for the acquisition and marketing of slaves since Antiquity. Imposing taxation on the slave trade and on the commerce of Italian colonial towns along the Black Sea littoral was the means of generating the reliable income the Tatars needed for the foundation of an independent state in the first half of the fifteenth century and for its subsequent maintenance for approximately three hundred years. The density of the population in the area controlled by Tatars was very low, and the agriculture there was rudimentary. Only the coastal districts of the peninsula were suitable for intense cultivation. Their yields, however, were insufficient to support the multitudinous warring layers, in contrast to the Balkans which proved to be the granary of Ottoman troops for centuries. Because of the frequent droughts and epidemics, most of the nomadic Nogai Tatars living on the steppe and in Bucak under the suzerainty of the Crimean khan were compelled to pursue slave acquisition as their only sure means of subsistence. The Tatar clans of the military élite settled in the Crimea constantly needed slaves to work their estates. Thus, slave labour and revenues from the slave trade were indispensable to the Crimean Khanate for centuries.

Research into the Crimean Tatar slave trade has concentrated mainly on raids against Polish and Russian areas, on the fate of slaves seized in these territories and on the revenues from it that accrued to the Ottoman treasury.¹ A major stride has taken place recently with the publication of

¹For Russian and Polish captives, see A. A. Novosel'skij, *Bor'ba Moskovskogo Gosudarstva s tatarami v pervoj polovine XVII. veka*. Moskva, 1948; Alan W. Fisher, "Muscovy and the Black Sea Slave Trade," *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* 6:4 (1972) 575–594; *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300–1914*. Ed. by

Ottoman customs registers. Rough estimates can thus be replaced by exact figures concerning the magnitude of the Black Sea slave trade, and of the profits from it pocketed by the Ottomans after 1475, when the Italian coastal colonies were occupied and the Khanate forced into a loose dependency. In 1529, 10,000 gold coins, approximately one quarter of the customs revenue of the busiest port, Caffa, derived from slaves exported from the Crimea.² Of total Ottoman income from the Crimea in 1577–78, 29 per cent came from the slave trade. An indication of the special value of slaves is the fact that a customs duty of 256 *akçe* or nearly 4 gold coins per capita was levied on them (as compared to the 4.2 per cent duty levied on ordinary goods).³ This was the equivalent to 6–12 per cent of a price ranging from 25 to 50 gold coins per capita that could be achieved in slave markets. Thus, duties on slaves were very high. Using the customs revenues of 1578 as a basis, İnalçık put the number of slaves exported over a period of 14 months at 17,502.⁴ The customs income of the Black Sea ports went in part to the leaders of the Khanate. Prior to 1475, the Genoese colonies paid tribute to the khan, while after that date the Ottomans gave various amounts, mostly from the customs duties levied in Caffa, to the khan, the *kalga* and the *nureddin* as annual allowances (*salyane*).⁵

Opportunities for taking prisoners during military campaigns

A large number of slaves could be captured by the Tatars during their campaigns, which were directed mainly against the Russians, Poles and

Halil İnalçık with Donald Quataert. Cambridge, 1994; Leszek Podhorodecki, *Chanat Krymski*. Warszawa, 1987, 59–66.

²Halil İnalçık, *The Customs Register of Caffa, 1487–1490*. (Sources and Studies on the Ottoman Black Sea, 1. Ed. by Victor Ostapchuk.) Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1996, 145.

³Ahmed Akgündüz, *Osmanlı kanunnâmeleri ve hukûkî tahlilleri*. VI. kitap. *Kanunî Sultân Süleyman devri kanunnâmeleri*. II. kısım. *Kanunî devri eyâlet kanunnâmeleri (II)*. İstanbul, 1993, 572–594 (the regulations for the *sancak* of Caffa).

⁴İnalçık, *The Customs Register*, 143 and *An Economic and Social History*, 283–285.

⁵In 1578, 10 per cent of the total revenues was paid as *salyane*. İnalçık, *The Customs Register*, 143. Detailed *salyane* lists are published in A. W. Fisher, “Les rapport entre l’Empire Ottoman et la Crimée. L’aspect financier,” *Cahiers du Monde Russe et Soviétique* 13 (1972) 368–382.

Circassians. Most successful were the incursions led by the khan, the *kalga* or the *nureddin*. Minor Tatar raids (*akın/çapul*) threatened the inhabitants of the region twice a year, during the harvest and in winter.⁶ The raids against Russia and Poland were successful because the borders of these countries were open towards the south. The Russian state was not in the position to defend militarily the population of the vast areas, so it made provision for a part of the ransom of the slaves to be raised by means of a tax levied centrally.⁷ The redemption of the captives was performed through the mediation of envoys sent to the Crimea, or that of Armenian or Jewish merchants. In the Polish Commonwealth there was no such institutionalised way of redeeming slaves. The population was reduced to self-defence, and indeed managed to ward off the smaller stray Tatar bands.⁸ It was in the late sixteenth century that Russia began to fortify its southern defensive line and to garrison it with troops. The wooden outposts there were themselves not much of an obstacle to the Tatars, but the constant and concerted patrols that warned the population of imminent Tatar raids – and that sometimes freed captives and frustrated retreat to the Crimea – did control their activity. The propitious effect of the chain of garrisons was soon to be felt: after 1571, no Tatar raiders reached the walls of Moscow. In the second half of the seventeenth century, the defence system became even more effective when both the Poles and the Russians took advantage of the Cossacks and Kalmuks living in the buffer zone in the prevention of Tatar attacks.

The economic significance of captives in the Khanate

From the booty of a successful campaign the khan's due was one-fifth of the most valuable captives. This is borne out by the terms *pencik* (Persian:

⁶*Bu vilayetde akının iki vakti vardır: Biri orak zamanı ve biri kış eyyamıdır.* Özalp Gökbilgin, *Tarih-i Sahib Giray Han*. Ankara, 1973, 46.

⁷Fisher, "Muscovy and the Black Sea," 589.

⁸E. Lassota, an envoy of Emperor Rudolf II dispatched to the Cossacks, wrote that the Polish peasant took a hoe and also a gun when he went to till his fields. He built small stone edifices with crenelles to which he retreated in the event of danger and from where he could frighten off the Tatars, who feared firearms. *Tagebuch des Erich Lassota von Steblau*. Nach einer Handschrift der von Gersdorf-Weicha'schen Bibliothek zu Bautzen herausgegeben und mit Bemerkungen begleitet von Reinhold Schottin. Halle, 1866, 201.

penc ü yek ‘fifth’) and *sauga* (Mongolian: *sauga* ‘gift, fifth’) in Turkish documents on the Tatars.⁹ Under the law of Islam, the khan as the ruler was entitled to one-fifth. The Ottoman chronicler Hüseyin Hezarfen clearly stated in one of his works (in the section on the Crimean khans) that when news came of the Tatar troops’ approaching the border, the *sauga agası* was sent to meet them and to collect one-fifth of the spoils for the khan. When, however, the army was headed by the *kalga*, the *nureddin* or the head of the clan chieftains, the *şirin beg*, a tithe was due to them.¹⁰ At the same time, relying on the account of 1578 by Martin Broniewski, envoy of the king of Poland, Fisher opined that the khan only received a tithe too.¹¹ According to another noteworthy statement by Broniewski, the khan’s yearly due was three golden florins after each prisoner of noble birth in Tatar captivity and one *thaler* after a prisoner born to a less distinguished family, as well as 10 per cent of the ransom or sale price of captives.¹² So far, we have too few internal sources at our disposal to settle the issue conclusively. It is, however, certain that the gain of the Crimean khan from the slave trade was multiple, comprising direct income after the sale of one-fifth (or tenth) of prisoners and indirect income in the form of a 10 per cent tax levied after prisoners in Tatar possession and of the *salyane* from the slave-trading ports. An account by the Tatar chronicler Remmal Hoca allows us to estimate the number of prisoners owned by the khan: he said that Sahib Giray khan (1532–1551) had around 3,000 slaves (*kul*) on his death.¹³

⁹BOA MAD 9848 (8 Zilkade 1077 / May 2, 1667; *pencik*). Russian sources claim that in 1644 İslam Giray III khan (1644–1654) sent the *hazinedar* to Or, the gateway to the peninsula, to collect 10 gold coins after every slave brought back by the returning army. This was one-fifth of the price attainable. Novosel’skij, *op. cit.*, 335. Erroneously, Ürekli regards the *sauga* as a tithe; see Muzaffer Ürekli, *Kırım Hanlığının kuruluşu ve Osmanlı himayesinde yükselişi (1441–1569)*. Ankara, 1989, 85.

¹⁰Hezarfen Hüseyin Efendi, *Telhîsü'l-beyân fî kavânîn-i âl-i Osmân*. Ed. by Sevim İlgürel. Ankara, 1998, 170.

¹¹Fisher, “Moscovy and the Black Sea,” 583. Martin Broniewski, “Opisanie ... Kryma (Tartariae Descriptio),” *Zapiski Odesskogo Obščestva Istorii i Drevnostej* 6 (1867) 362–363.

¹²Broniewski, *op. cit.*, 359.

¹³Gökbilgin, *op. cit.*, 138. Since the chronicler lists the 3,000 prisoners among the chattels of the khan, it is certain that the term *kul* did not denote military slaves but simply prisoners. The number does not seem high, especially knowing that Sahib Giray died in 1551, after several successful campaigns against the Circassians.

Since returns from the slave trade were one of the chief sources of income, both the Ottomans and the Tatars in the Crimea contracted revenues from this particular source for pious purposes. The customs register of Caffa reveals that four *akçe* after every slave exported went to the pious foundation of Kasım pasha.¹⁴ The Crimean khans set a more generous rate, donating two *guruş* after every prisoner entering the *sancak* to a *cami* in Akkerman.¹⁵

The khan regularly sent prisoners of war seized during the campaigns as presents to the Porte. There is not enough evidence as yet to decide whether this was a tax or not, although Broniewski states that it was.¹⁶ Presumably, the size of each single donation was determined by the status of the khan in question, and the importance of the goal he was intent on attaining.¹⁷ One thing is certain: when in the middle of the seventeenth

¹⁴Inalcık, *The Customs Register*, 146. Kasım pasha was the *sancakbeyi*, then from 1579 the *beylerbeyi* of Caffa.

¹⁵*Kırım hanlarından merhum ve mağfurunleh [Mengli Giray] han tabe serahu kaza-i mezburda bina eyledüğü cami-i şerif huddamı vazifeleri için kaza-i merkuma gelen esirlerden kadiminden ikişer guruş pencik alınugelmiş iken hala eminler olıgelmiş muhalif müdahale edüb taaddi eyledüklerin bilfiil hala Kırım hanı olan cenab-i emaret-meab [Adil Giray, 1666–1671] han damet maalihu ilam edüb ellerinde olan emr ve defter mucibince amel olunmak babında emr-i şerifüm verilmek rica eylemeğin...* BOA MAD 9848, 96 (8 Zilkade 1077 / May 2, 1667). In the original, the names of the khans are left out. When listing the *camis* in Akkerman, Evliya Çelebi only mentions one established by the Tatars, that of Mengli Giray khan (1478–1515), so the sum raised after the prisoners of war must have been contracted for the running of this *cami*. *Evlîyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi*. V. Ed. by Yücel Dağlı – Seyit Ali Kahraman – İbrahim Sezgin. İstanbul, 2001, 63.

¹⁶“In the form of annual tax (*v vide dani*), the khan sends to the sultan slaves of both sexes, precious and ordinary furs, suet (*maslo*), and salt, in which the Crimea especially abounds.” Broniewski, *op. cit.*, 359.

¹⁷When Bahadır Giray khan (1637–1641) died, the *nureddin* Kırım Giray tried to obtain the throne – without success – by sending Circassian prisoners as a gift. Kırımî el-Hacc Abdu'l-Gaffâr, *Umdetü't-tevarih*. (Türk Tarih Encümeni Mecmuası İlavesi, 11.) Ed. by Necib Asım Bey. İstanbul, 1343/1927, 123. On January 2, 1667, the Emperor's envoy to the Porte, J. B. Casanova, reported from Edirne that Adil Giray khan had sent 400 Russian children, both boys and girls, to the sultan on the last day of November, as well as 300 Cossacks for the galleys. HHStA Staatskanzlei Türkei, Karton 139. fol. 45b. Since Adil Giray was elected khan in late 1666, one cannot overlook the correlation between the donation and the sultan's confirmation of Adil Giray.

century permission was asked for a campaign, the khan was to send a fixed number of slaves (100) to the Porte.¹⁸

When the Tatars were not to launch a campaign of their own but rather to join an ally as auxiliary troops, the leaders of the Tatar units were given cash and presents, but most troops had to content themselves with the booty as pay.¹⁹ If Ottomans, Poles or Cossacks took part in a raid together with the Tatars, the captives and the livestock (*can ve mal*) were the due of the Tatars; the rest of the booty went to the others. The Ottomans and Tatars sanctioned such agreements with an oath upon the Koran.²⁰ The prisoners were counted and distributed at crossing places, bridges or at the fortress of Or, which guarded the entrance to the Crimean peninsula.²¹ The standard slaves were immediately passed on to the slave merchants, while the more valuable ones were kept for a longer time in hope of larger amounts of ransom. In Broniewski's view, the most expedient course was to set as the ransom the amount the person would have yielded when sold to the Ottomans, or if the prisoner was more affluent, twice that amount. Those who were unable to have themselves ransomed sooner or later passed into the hands of slave traders, or if the

¹⁸*Azametlü padişahum, hanlara taraf-i padişahîden akına ruhsat verildiği zaman yüz esir dahi ziyade gönderürlerdi...* TSMA E 7022/633. The document might have been written during the reign of Sultan İbrahim (1640–1648).

¹⁹Without undervaluing the role of pillaging and the slave trade, I am increasingly convinced that the Crimean Tatars undertook regular military ventures for fixed tariffs: 5,000 gold coins in cash at around the turn of the seventeenth century. If the sultan and the rulers of Poland, Russia or Transylvania wished to avail themselves of Tatar help, they paid the same sum. The cash could be supplemented by various presents in kind of different value, including furs, cloth, ornate caftans, or swords. Retracing Russian–Polish relations and collating them with payment or non-payment of tax in a given year, one can rightly hypothesise that the tribute they tended to present as gifts aimed at averting Tatar raids was actually the payment. Mária Ivanics, “Hitharc vagy hadivállalkozás? [Holy War or Military Undertaking?],” in “*Nem búcsúzom.*” *Emlékkönyv Benda Kálmán tiszteletére* [Commemorative Volume in Honour of Kálmán Benda]. Szeged, 1994, 29–33.

²⁰*Evlîyâ Çelebi seyahatnâmesi*, V. 72–73: *Zîrâ ahd [u] amân ve yemîn-i Kur'ân anın üstüne idi kim mâl ve cânlı makûlesi Tatarın ola. Sâ'ir kelepür-esbâb sonra Leh'in ve Kardaş Kazağın ola.* This kind of sharing of the booty could be observed during the raid into the Muraköz region in 1603: *Das grosze Vieh, welches ein grosze Summa, hat der Tarterhan alles is Posega auf der Weidt treiben laszen, was aber von klein Vieh, Schaff, Lamper und dergleiche, das haben die Tatern und Türggen bey sich behalten und under einander ausspendiert.* KA Hofkriegsratregistratur 1603 Expedit No. 66. April 30, 1603.

²¹Novosel'skij, *op. cit.*, 335.

Tatar owner needed them, they remained with him. Captives were often freed in exchanges, and Broniewski notes that the Tatars expended more effort in searching for their captured comrades than did the Christians. These captured comrades were mostly exchanged for Christians the Tatars currently held. For example, İslam Giray, later khan, was released in exchange for ten Polish noblemen in 1637.²² Underlying this ambition was a religious idea. Islam prohibited Muslims from enslaving other Muslims, but under compulsion they sometimes did so. At this juncture it is interesting to note the sultan's decree ordering the *kadis* to seek and redeem all Tatar children sold off as slaves by their parents in order to ward off starvation.²³

Some of the captives could not be sold or redeemed, especially when there was an excess supply.²⁴ These were used in agriculture. It is impossible to assess the number and fate of slaves remaining in the Crimea, and the role they played in the economy of the Khanate, until the *kadiasker* books, which are seen to be basic sources for an understanding of the Tatar economy, are published.²⁵ At present, one can rely only on a few excerpts published towards the end of the nineteenth century. These all reveal that slaves tilled the lands in the south of the peninsula, while in the grasslands where the soil was ill suited to agriculture they were used to drill wells for livestock.²⁶ The contracts of sale entered in the *kadiasker*

²²Aleksander Benningsen – Pertev Naili Boratav – Dilek Desaive – Chantal Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Le Khanat de Crimée dans les Archives du Musée du Palais de Topkapı*. Paris, La Haye, 1978, 341.

²³The decree was issued on Mehmed Giray II's request to the *kadis* of Nicopolis, Silistre and Vidin. The places would suggest Tatars from Akkerman. BOA MD 40, No. 500 (29 Şaban 987 / October 21, 1579).

²⁴There were especially many prisoners in the Crimea in the mid-seventeenth century when the Cossacks were fighting against the Poles in league now with the Russians, now with the Tatars. As the Russian envoys to the Crimea reported, a Tatar commoner had some 10–20 prisoners and a *mirza* 100 prisoners. Fearing a mutiny, the khan ordered that the captives be fettered together in twos and kept in a pit for the night, upon the boarded-over top of which slept guards. G. A. Sanin, *Otnošenija Rossii i Ukraïny s Krymskim Hanstvom v seredine XVII. veka*. Moskva, 1987, 194–195, 240.

²⁵Some specimens were transcribed by Halil İnalçık, “Kırım Hanlığı kadı sicilleri bulundu,” *Bulleten* 60 (1996) 165–190.

²⁶Broniewski (*op. cit.*, 357) writes: “The Tatar noblemen live in villages near the forests, and not on the steppe. Although many have no family estates (*pomest'e*), they have lands cultivated by Hungarian, Russian, Vlach, and Moldavian prisoners who are many and who are treated, poor souls, like animals. ... The Tatars living on the steppe behind

books provide hints as to what the value of the 20–40 or 25–50 gold coins paid for a slave might have been. In 1021/1612, for example, a mother sold to her daughter in Salacık a plot with a two-roomed house, fruit trees, other trees, and related goods on it for 40 golden florins (*filori*). For this amount, she bought the Russian woman-prisoner owned by her daughter.²⁷ In the same year, a piece of land valued at 40 gold coins was obtained by a lucky buyer for the bargain price of 48 sheep.²⁸ In 1612, a debt of 300 gold coins was discharged with 45 gold coins in cash and a slave of Hungarian origin worth 60 gold coins, while the remaining 200 (!) gold coins were paid off by giving 400 sheep.²⁹ A horse could be bought for 15 gold coins and above.³⁰

Prisoners could be given away as presents or bequeathed. In 1065 (November 11, 1654 – October 30, 1655), Arslan *aga* presented his underage son Toktamış with 18 Cossacks, of whom two were single and three married with four, four and two children respectively. The married Cossacks must have lived in the household for a long time, since all their children had Muslim names, while the unmarried Cossacks are mentioned by Slavic names in the source.³¹ Of the inheritance documents, Laškov published only those referring to real estate. Although he also mentioned prisoners as being in the lists of chattels, he did not note their number or value. Nevertheless, they cannot have been few, since the cultivation of bequeathed arable land, hayfields and vineyards, as well as the operation of mills and the care of livestock on pastures and in stables there, needed quite considerable manpower. The institutional conditions for the bringing up of captives to be military slaves similar to those of the Ottomans were lacking. Although from the second half of the seventeenth century there was vigorous Ottoman influence in the Crimean Khanate,

Perekop, and those having no forests in the peninsula, have their slaves dig wells all over; they use dung as fuel collected on the steppe by the captives and dried in the sun.”

²⁷F. F. Laškov, “Istoričeskij očerk krimsko-tatarskogo zemlevladienija,” *Izvestija Tavričeskoj Učonnoj Arhivnoj Komissii* 24 (1896) 75.

²⁸Laškov, *op. cit.*, 85.

²⁹İnalçık, *op. cit.*, 180–181.

³⁰In the village of Kongrat, a Tatar bought a horse on the way to a campaign for 30 gold coins (*altun*). He paid 9 gold pieces in advance, promising to pay the rest on his return. He cannot have been very successful, because finally the seller and the debtor agreed on a sum of 15 gold coins. İnalçık, *op. cit.*, 180.

³¹*Ibid.*, 81.

Crimean society preserved the nomadic legacy of the Golden Horde, and the tribal aristocracy retained its dominant role both in state administration and in military affairs.

Opportunities for capturing slaves in the Hungarian campaigns

Crimean Tatar troops arrived in the territories of Historical Hungary as auxiliary troops to the Ottoman army, or, on the Porte's orders, as punishers of its vassal Transylvania. Their presence in Hungary spans almost two centuries (1521–1717). Unlike the campaigns against Russia or Poland (which took place annually or even more than once a year), those against Hungary were rare: half a century could pass without a Tatar raid. With the division of Hungary into three parts in 1541, the chances of Tatar incursions varied from part to part. Up to 1566, the Tatars campaigned together with the main body of the Ottoman army in the central part of the country, above all in the flatlands. They were most often deployed along the Lower Danube and in Wallachia, joining the Ottomans near Belgrade. After the Treaty of Adrianople (1568), which terminated the first phase of Habsburg–Ottoman rivalry, Tatar troops did not arrive in Hungarian theatres until 1594, when during the Long War they entered them through Poland and northern Transylvania. Minor Tatar contingents of various sizes remained in Hungary until 1606, but there were only three campaigns in which a large Tatar army was involved (1594, 1602–1603, 1604–1605). The focus of their attacks shifted to Transylvania and to those Hungarian counties under Habsburg rule that bordered the areas subordinated to the Porte. The next Tatar contingents to come were auxiliary formations in the Hungarian campaigns of the Köprülü (1658, 1660, 1663), mainly to punish Transylvania for its disloyalty to the sultan, and to the Uyvar (Érsekújvár) campaign. In Upper Hungary, they led raids as far as Moravia.³² During the wars of liberation in the late seventeenth century (1683–1699), they were continuously

³²Mária Ivanics, "Tatár kémiszolgálat az 1663-as magyarországi hadjáraton [The Tatar Intelligence Service during the Hungarian Campaign of 1663]," in *Információáramlás a magyar és török végvári rendszerben* [Communication and Intelligence-Gathering in the Hungarian–Habsburg and Ottoman Border-Fortress Systems]. (Studia Agriensia, 20). Ed. by Tivadar Petercsák – Mátyás Berecz. Eger, 1999, 207–226.

present all over the country and even pillaged the villages of Lower and Upper Austria during the siege of Vienna.

In principle, the possibilities for the Tatars to seize prisoners in Hungary's three parts were not limitless. On the one hand, the Ottoman high command tried to curb Tatar devastation during campaigns, since labour was needed in the newly occupied areas as well. That it largely failed in its efforts is another question.³³ As a tributary and vassal of the sultan, Transylvania could always excuse itself for not paying its tribute to the sultan's treasury by referring to the capture of Transylvanians. Nevertheless, the Tatars fleeced those inhabitants who fled to towns or fortified churches and carried off unprotected villagers into captivity. In the area of Ottoman dominion, they could not extort ransoms openly, so they issued safe conducts for considerable sums of money to towns (including *has* towns of the sultan) to protect them from their own Tatar troops. They even left some Tatars behind in the towns to chase off stray Tatar warriors.³⁴ The Tatars could loot freely only in Habsburg Hungary and in Austria's Hereditary Provinces.

Because of the large distances involved, the transport of prisoners from the Hungarian theatre of war proved to be too difficult. The Tatars lost the prey they seized in 1594 when on their way home Michael, Voivode of Wallachia (1593–1601), rose in revolt against the sultan and attacked them along the Lower Danube.³⁵ Several references reveal that Hungarian prisoners of war were not transported to the Crimea, but instead sold in Buda or in the Lower Danube ports. In a circular letter dated 1604, the *kadıs* and commissioners (*emin*) of the ports in the area from Belgrade to Akkerman were ordered to arrest those Tatars who had loaded their prisoners on board ships and who were on their way towards

³³*Tarih-i Peçevi*. II. İstanbul, 1283/1866, 157.

³⁴Lajos Fekete, "Gyöngyös város levéltárának török iratai [Ottoman Documents in the Municipal Archives of Gyöngyös]," *Levéltári Közlemények* 11 (1933) 111, 139 (Gyöngyös, 1685, without indication of the sum). Áron Szilády – Sándor Szilágyi, *Okmánytár a hódoltság történetéhez Magyarországon. Nagy-Kőrös, Cegléd, Dömsöd, Szeged, Halas levéltárából* [Archive on the History of Ottoman Rule in Hungary. Documents from the Archives from Cegléd, Dömsöd, Szeged, and Halas]. II. Budapest, 1863, 129 (Nagykőrös 1685, 600 Dutch *thalerslesedi gurus*). Debrecen város levéltára [Municipal Archives of Debrecen], No. 78 (Debrecen, 1690, without an indication of the amount).

³⁵Report of Marco Venier, Venetian ambassador, dated February 20, 1591. Eudoxiu Hurmuzaki, *Documente privitoare la Istoria Românilor*. IV/2. Bucureşti, 1884, 188–189.

the Crimea, despite a prohibition on doing so issued by the khan's son, Toktamış Giray, who was spending the winter in Hungary with his army. These prisoners were to be seized for the treasury and the Tatars concerned punished.³⁶

Hungarian captives had little hope of regaining their freedom as they were quickly ushered into Ottoman territory. They could not escape en masse unless the terrain was favourable. For example, in 1717 the last Tatar raid into Hungary ended with 861 persons, more than half of the 1,464 captured in Ugocsa county, breaking loose and returning home along the paths through the Carpathians.³⁷ There are two events known that are possibly curiosities only of the Hungarian theatre of war. In 1599, uprisings in Anatolia caused the Ottoman high command to initiate peace talks with the Habsburg emperor. The Ottomans not only freed captives of their own, but also redeemed prisoners of the Tatars, possibly to promote the negotiations.³⁸ A similar case occurred in 1602 in Transylvania. The Tatars acquired 3,000 Transylvanian captives from the *haiducks* of Giorgio Basta, the commander of the imperial army. Before the Tatars could remove the prisoners from the country, Zsigmond Báthory, Prince of Transylvania (1601–1602), sent envoys to the pasha of Temesvár and to the Grand Vizier with the argument that the prisoners in Tatar captivity were subjects of the sultan and taxpayers of the Porte. When the Tatars received guarantees from the Grand Vizier for compensation, they set these captives free. Although there is no information as to whether they did in fact receive the price of their prisoners, it is highly likely that they did, since the Ottoman high command was obliged to rely on Tatar assistance in this war, which dragged on for some fifteen years.³⁹

³⁶MD 77, No. 356 (1013/1604).

³⁷Dezső Obetkó, "Az 1717-i tatárbetörés [The Tatar Incursion of 1717]," *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 42 (1941) 193–210. The figures are preserved in the records of Ugocsa county (today part of the Ukraine).

³⁸...*Die Türckhen haben schier alle die gefangene von den Tartern gekhaufft, darauf der Bassa alle aufschreiben laszen vnnd sich dahin erkhkert da man ihren Nemben werd, dasz er ausz des Türckhischen Kaisers Schatz ieden sein gelt bezallen laszen. Nun halt ich weiter fortfahren, Ob E.F.D. Commissarien alhie schickhen Werden, oder ob ich gar soll schweigen in dieser sachen, Erwart ich von E.F.D. ein bescheidt.* Miklós Pálffy to Archduke Matthias. Esztergom, November 5, 1599. HHStA Turcica 82/2, fol. 174.

³⁹The treasury paid an average of 20 gold coins per capita to the *sipahis* for Cossacks captured in Moldavia (*sipahilerden alınan esirler için sahiblerine miriden biner akçe verilüb*). MD 34, No. 43 (13 Muharrem 986 / March 22, 1578). They clearly paid far less

Oddly enough, the Tatars captured their single large group of Hungarians not in Hungary, but in Poland, when on July 31, 1657 the army of György Rákóczi II, Prince of Transylvania, was encircled near Tremblowa. Hungarian historiography compares the event to the disaster of Mohács in 1526, not only on account of the loss of life, but also because of the destruction wrought in the ruling élite. György Rákóczi II, who was offered the Polish crown by a handful of Protestant Polish magnates, entered the First Northern War (1655–1660) as an ally of the Swedes and the Cossacks.⁴⁰ Recent historians have maintained that Rákóczi took 19,000 troops to Poland, 13,000 of them from Transylvania. The remaining 6,000 were put at his disposal by the Voivodes of Moldavia and Wallachia. In support were 20,000 Cossacks.⁴¹ Undertaking this Polish campaign without the consent of the Porte, Rákóczi not only lacked insight into the Polish domestic situation, but also failed to assess international power relations accurately.⁴² To counter the Swedish–Transyl-

for Transylvanian prisoners, since these were kept in the territory of the principality. The Tatars perhaps received a golden florin or two per person, for Zsigmond Báthory offered first 3,000 then 6,000 gold coins for the captives, although eventually the Tatars did not accept it on account of Ottoman pressure. *Magyar nyelvű kortársi feljegyzések Erdély múltjából. Szamosközy István történetíró kézirata. XVII. század eleje* [Hungarian-Language Records from Transylvania's Past. The Manuscript of the Chronicler István Szamosközy. Early Seventeenth Century]. Budapest, 1991, 63–69.

⁴⁰On the course of the war and the alliances, see Sándor Gebei, *II. Rákóczi György erdélyi fejedelem külpolitikája (1648–1657)* [The Foreign Policy of György Rákóczi II, Prince of Transylvania (1648–1657)]. Eger, 1996; *Wojna polsko szwedzka 1655–1660*. Ed. by Jan Wimmer. Warszawa, 1973. Eckhardt Opitz, *Österreich und Brandenburg im Schwedisch–Polnischen Krieg 1655–1660*. (Militärgeschichtliche Studien, 10.) Boppard am Rhein, 1969.

⁴¹*Erdély története* [A History of Transylvania]. II. Ed. by László Makkai – Zoltán Szász. Budapest, 1987, 717. In Russian sources 20,000 Hungarians, 6,000 Moldavians and Wallachians and 16,000 Cossacks led by Anton Ždanovič are mentioned. Sanin, *op. cit.*, 214–215. The Polish sources mention a 35,000-strong Transylvanian army. *Wojna polsko szwedzka*, 85.

⁴²Of the Ottoman chroniclers, Naima (*Tarih-i Naima*. II. Konstantiniyye, 1734, 634–636) and Evliya Çelebi (*Seyahatnâme*, V. 58–77) give detailed accounts of the campaign of 1657. It is Evliya Çelebi alone who mentions (*op. cit.*, 74) that the Transylvanians had permission from Boynu-eğri Mehmed pasha for the Polish campaign. The relevant passages of Naima are copied almost word for word from Vecihi's and Abdi pasha's chronicles. *Kitab-i tarih-i Vecihi*. TSMK EH 1425, fols. 65a–82a. Abdi Paşa, *Vekayiname*. TSMK H 1363, fols. 56a–67b.

vanian–Cossack alliance, a Danish–Habsburg–Polish–Tatar league was soon formed. The Danes attacked the Swedes, the Cossacks broke with the Transylvanians after July 21 and the troops of the two voivodes returned home. Deserted by his allies, Rákóczi found himself in a trap. With the threat of a Tatar onslaught looming, he was forced to ask the Poles for peace. He left his dwindling and enfeebled army in the hands of his commander-in-chief, János Kemény, and hurried to Transylvania with 300 soldiers. On July 31, his army was first ransomed at Tremblowa by the Tatars.⁴³ After this, the commander-in-chief was lured out of the camp for alleged talks and while he was away the Tatars launched an attack.⁴⁴ Contemporary sources disagree regarding the losses suffered by the Transylvanian force. In János Kemény's autobiography the number of units under his command is put at 112, each having 25–30 members. Prior to the Tatar attack, the commander-in-chief estimated the effective strength of his army at 4,000–5,000.⁴⁵ To this need to be added the

⁴³Anonymous writer, *Rákóczi eposz* [Rákóczi Epic]. Edited by Csaba Szigeti. Budapest, 1988, 172. The epic claims that the Tatar khan asked for two *thalers* per person so that the size of the Hungarian force should be clear to him. According to Georg Kraus (*Erdélyi krónika 1608–1665* [Transylvanian Chronicle 1608–1665]. Translated and supplied with a foreword and notes by Sándor Vogel. Budapest, 1994, 280), 2,000 *thalers* were collected for the khan and the vizier, 100 ducats for the [*nureddin*] sultan and a certain amount for the rest of the Tatar nobles. János Kemény mentions 20,000 *thalers* he had collected in the camp for the khan, the vizier and the nobles, and another 1,000 for the *nureddin* sultan. *Kemény János önéletírása* [Autobiography of János Kemény]. Selected, edited and supplied with a foreword and notes by Éva V. Windisch. Budapest, 1959, 365.

⁴⁴Kemény was summoned from the camp by the *nureddin* sultan Adil Giray, who opposed his being sent to the Porte. His letter to János Kemény with his seal was published in *Török-magyarkori állam-okmánytár* [State Documents from the Period of Ottoman Rule in Hungary; hereinafter: *TMÁOT*]. VII. Ed. by Áron Szilády – Sándor Szilágyi. Budapest, 1874, 335 (for the original document, see MOL, Erdélyi Guberniumi Levéltár [Archives of the Transylvanian Governorate], Cista Diplomatica F 126. No. 468).

⁴⁵*Kemény János önéletírása*, 367. To this figure should be added the garrisons of some 2,000–3,000 left under the command of János Bethlen and András Gaudi in Cracow and Brest respectively which arrived home in September unharmed. Domokos Barabás, “A tatár rabok váltságdíja az 1657. szept. 2.-iki szamosújvári partialis gyűlésen [The Question of the Ransom for the Prisoners of the Tatars at the Partial Diet Assembled at Szamosújvár on September 2, 1657],” *Századok* 21 (1887) 427–434. On receiving news of the impending Tatar attack, a sizeable company under the leadership of László Gyulaffy took the road homewards across Moldavia. The Moldavians, however, massacred this

servants, cooks, sick, and so on.⁴⁶ Most of these probably died when the Tatars raided the camp, but even if we assume that the entire Transylvanian army was captured, we still cannot say how many of the prisoners actually reached the Crimea. For the Hungarians, the capture of 4,000–5,000 people was a tragic blow, although the extant Tatar chronicles do not even mention the victory over the Transylvanian army.⁴⁷ On the other hand, the khan, Mehmed Giray IV (1641–1644, 1654–1666), boasted in a letter to Tsar Alexis I of Russia (1645–1676) that “...out of Rákóczi’s army of some 70,000–80,000 no-one escaped, we slaughtered or captured all. But before we arrived, the king escaped during the night with some 15 men, but no-one was saved apart from them. We have crushed so many soldiers, seized their money, weapons and guns, and returned to our seat with so much spoil...”⁴⁸ By contrast, the Russian envoys retained in the Crimea described Mehmed Giray IV’s punitive campaign against Rákóczi as a failure, and noted scarcely more than two dozen prisoners. The Russian envoys had the job of consciously gathering information in the Crimea; in disguise, a Tatar servant of theirs was even received in audience by the khan’s *aga*. Therefore, it is out of the question that these envoys failed to notice a large transport of Hungarian slaves. Contemporary Polish memoirs, too, speak of there being few slaves, claiming that the Transylvanian army was annihilated by the Tatars.⁴⁹ For the time

force in its entirety. Kraus (*op. cit.*, 274) mentions 6,000 persons, which is possibly an exaggeration.

⁴⁶Magnates went to war with sizeable retinues. László Rédei was accompanied to Poland by 136 persons. Of these, 24 were mounted soldiers and 10 foot soldiers; the rest were servants, artisans, musicians, etc. They were followed by a coach, 10–20 carts drawn by oxen, and 10 wagons loaded with food. Out of this large company László Rédei and a mere twenty others escaped: the rest were killed or captured by the Tatars. Iván Nagy, “Rédei László történeti maradványai 1658–1663 [The Papers of László Rédei 1658–1663],” *Magyar Történelmi Társulat Tár* 17[2:5] (1871) 12–13.

⁴⁷Evliya Çelebi, however, claims that the Tatars remembered the battle in Poland against Rákóczi as *erkek Macar seferi* (“the brave Hungarian campaign”), during which they took so much booty that whenever someone became rich, he would proverbially be asked, “Didn’t you take part in the brave Hungarian campaign?” (*Seyahatnâme*, V. 74).

⁴⁸V. Vel’jaminov-Zernov – Hüseyin Feyzhanov, *Materialy dlja istorii Krymskogo Hanstva*. Sanktpetersburg, 1864, No. 181, 519–522. Recently published in roman script and Romanian translation: Tahsin Cemil, *Relațiile Țarilor Române cu Poarta Otomană în documente turcești (1601–1712)*. București, 1984, 293–297.

⁴⁹Sanin, *op. cit.*, 226–227. Vilmos Schmidt, “Rákóczi György Lengyelországban 1657. Egykorú lengyel források után [György Rákóczi in Poland in the Light of Contem-

being, it is impossible to resolve the contradiction between the Hungarian and Russian–Polish sources. Maybe there are some clues in the fact that the Tatar vanguard sent against Rákóczi under the leadership of the *şirin beg*, Kelmehmed *beg*, was encircled by the Cossacks at the mouth of the Dnieper. As there was insufficient manpower or time to relieve them, the Bucak Tatars (Nogais) subordinated to the Crimea and the Ottoman troops of Akkerman had to be deployed. Consequently, some of the prisoners must have been with them.

Treatment of the captives – the fate of the Hungarian prisoners of war

The captured greater nobles, together with János Kemény, who had passed into the possession of the khan, were retained decently in Çıfut kale next to Bahçisaray.⁵⁰ The prisoners communicated with the khan's people through an interpreter.⁵¹ The more affluent among them saw to their own needs.⁵² They were allowed to move around in Çıfut kale, but whenever the khan became angry with them, he had their legs shackled. All the other valuable captives were put up in castles, lest they should escape. Mihály Apafi, subsequently Prince of Transylvania, was kept in the castle of Or as the prisoner of Karaş *beg*, and many prisoners are reported to have been in Gözleve (Ievpatoria). Commoners were distributed among the villages. The Tatars did not sell the Hungarians to slave merchants. They must have been clear as to their worth, although certainly not from the handbooks giving advice on the purchase of slaves. Such guidance was offered in the three chapters on slavery in Kınalızade's *Ethics*, compiled in 1564. The author listed the characteristic traits of each nationality. With regard to Hungarian slaves, the following can

porary Polish Sources],” in *Az Erdélyi Múzeum-egylet Évkönyvei*. III. 1864–1865. Kolozsvár, 1866, 101–109.

⁵⁰Literally, Çıfut kale means Jewish fortress. The castle, a fortress with reinforced walls, was the centre of the Karaims of Jewish faith, built on a cliff towering above Bahçisaray. Sometimes János Kemény alluded to it as the *kaloda* (stocks), a pun on the Tatar word *kalada* (in the castle).

⁵¹Only the surname (Pápai) of the interpreter is known; he was possibly one of Kemény's servants. Nagy, *op. cit.*, 29–30.

⁵²János Orbai, Pál Béli's servant and fellow-prisoner, brought food from home to Bucak from time to time. *Székely oklevéltár* [Archives of the Seklers; hereinafter *SzOkI*]. VI. 1603–1698. Ed. by Lajos Szádeczky. Kolozsvár, 1897, 276–277.

be read: “The Hungarians are clever, sensible, capable of all sorts of trade and skilful. At the same time, they are malevolent and aggressive. They tend to kill, harm and escape. One has to handle them with care if one puts them in one’s service. Most are well built physically; their complexion is white.”⁵³ The gain was far larger when the owners of the noble Hungarian prisoners kept them until they were ransomed for substantial sums. They therefore sent delegates to Transylvania to announce their ransom demands.⁵⁴

For the first time in its history, the Principality of Transylvania was faced with the difficult task of redeeming a sizeable number of prisoners. But their liberation was delayed, because in the period 1657–1662 Transylvania became a scene of Habsburg–Ottoman rivalry. Successive princes were chosen now by the Transylvanian Estates, now by the emperor and now by the Porte. The solvency of the country was undermined by the devastation perpetrated by the Tatars, who invaded it in support of the Ottomans in 1658. Not only many lives were lost in this attack, but the indemnity the Tatars imposed upon the country drained away money that could have been used for ransom purposes by the Transylvanian towns.⁵⁵ Despite this, the Transylvanian Diet tried to devise the legal framework and the monetary resources for the redemption of the prisoners. In 1657, the Diet imposed a tax on all Transylvanians “according to their means” to cover the ransom for the prisoners of war.

⁵³Hans Müller, *Die Kunst des Sklavenkaufs nach arabischen, persischen und türkischen Ratgebern vom 10. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert*. Freiburg, 1980, 185.

⁵⁴The name of the envoy survived in corrupted form: Doroberg Ali Bek (*TMÁOT* III. Ed. by Áron Szilády – Sándor Szilágyi. Pest, 1870, 442–443) or Dayi Loth Ali Beg (Kraus, *op. cit.*, 292–293). Presumably it concealed the name Devlet Ali beg.

⁵⁵In 1658, Brassó paid 30,000 *thalers*, Sebesvár 20,000, Szeben 27,000, Szászsebes 4,000, and Kolozsvár 60,000 in indemnity to the khan, Mehmed Giray IV. The capital of the principality, Gyulafehérvár, was set on fire by the Tatars, the inhabitants were carried off into slavery, and the prince’s library and archives burned to ashes. Kraus, *op. cit.*, 315–317. In the light of the report submitted by S. von Reniger, the Emperor’s ambassador, the sums mentioned do not seem excessive. Reniger reported on the audience granted by the Grand Vizier to the Transylvanian delegation. There were eight items on the agenda, the sixth being the indemnity of 500,000 *thalers* to be paid to the Porte by Transylvania. Half of it had already been remitted by Apafi, and the Transylvanians tried to get the 221,000 *thalers* extorted from the country by the Tatar khan and Seydi Ahmed pasha included in the other half. HHStA Staatskanzlei Türkei, Karton 134. Konv. 1. fols. 1a–12b (January 1, 1662) and Konv. 3. fols. 8a–23b (June 23, 1662).

As this tax failed to flow in, the following year the Diet merely negotiated approximately one quarter of the ransoms for the two chief commanders.⁵⁶ In 1659, the only concession the Diet was willing to make in the matter of the tax was the exemption of the estates of the prisoners from extraordinary levies.⁵⁷ Later, it decreed that the prisoners had to be redeemed by their own families.⁵⁸ There were instances in which families did not want the prisoner to return. In 1659, the Diet, meeting at Beszterce, then enacted a law stipulating that those who did not wish to redeem their prisoners should be deprived by the county, town or district officials of the goods due to the persons in question, thereby arranging for their redemption in this way. Those who had squandered the goods of captives should be deprived of their own goods.⁵⁹

With regard to the freeing of the prisoners, the first task was to assess how many were still alive, where they had been taken, how much the ransoms were, and so forth. The first step was taken by György Rákóczi, who, on his return home, sent Máté Balog as his delegate to the Crimea and pressed Kemény make a list of the slaves.⁶⁰ Today, three lists are extant of the prisoners in Tatar captivity: the first was compiled by Kemény, probably of individuals in his entourage, listing separately those who had died (44 people) and those captured (51 people).⁶¹ The second list must also have been written at an early stage, prior to mid-1659, because it notes that János Kemény was there (in the Crimea); it enumerates only 33 names, but indicates the ransom amounts for 25

⁵⁶Barabás, *op. cit.*, 427–434. *Erdélyi Országgyűlési Emlékek/Monumenta Comititalia Regni Transylvaniae* [Documents of the Transylvanian Diet; hereinafter: *EOE*]. XI. 1649–1658. Ed. by Sándor Szilágyi. Budapest, 1886, 372.

⁵⁷Sándor Szilágyi, “Kemény János kora és fejedelemsége [The Age and Reign of Prince János Kemény],” *Magyar Történelmi Tár* 7 (1860) 134.

⁵⁸*EOE* XII. 1658–1661. Ed. by Sándor Szilágyi. Budapest, 1887, 497.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, 221, 486.

⁶⁰“You have failed to send the list of the prisoners...” György Rákóczi to János Kemény on February 7, 1658, see P. Szathmáry Károly, “A gyerőmonostori Báró Kemény-család fejedelmi ágának okmánytára. Közügyek 1538–1722 [Documents of the Princely Branch of the Baron Kemény de Gyerőmonostor Family. Public Affairs 1538–1722],” *Magyar Történelmi Tár* 18[2:6] (1871) 122.

⁶¹Károly Magyarai, “Adatok Kemény János életéhez 1634–1660 [Data on the Life of János Kemény 1634–1660],” *Történelmi Tár* 1905, 469–497.

men.⁶² The third list was compiled subsequently, certainly based on Kemény's register as one of its sources. It contains 188 names, both aristocrats and other noblemen, the rest are only mentioned in general, as "vice-governors, lesser nobility in abundance", or as "field and *haiduck* captains, lieutenants with high and low ranking soldiers, again a multitude".⁶³ Luckily, there is only partial overlapping between the three sources, so that today 275 prisoners are known by name from the three documents, from contemporary chronicles and from family archival data published and unpublished alike. The fate of the Hungarian prisoners in the Crimea is outlined below on the basis of this stock of material.

It was a precondition for liberation that the prisoner and his owner should agree upon the ransom or indemnity to be paid. This took a long time because the Tatars would initially ask an unrealistically high amount, which could often be reduced through negotiation to one half or even one quarter of the original demand. Before making the agreement, the Tatars would try to discover the financial status of the slave in question, while the family would obviously attempt to conceal it. If the Tatars thought the prisoner had more money than he was offering, they underscored their demands with torture.⁶⁴ Their main method was to torture the prisoner and to threaten him with the cutting off of his nose and ears, to drive higher the ransom obtained. Killing him, however, was not in the Tatars' interests. Especially hard was the lot of national dignitaries who were unable to hide their rank or financial standing. The more affluent agreed with the Tatars concerning their ransom just after

⁶²Farkas Deák, "Adatok a török-tatár rabok történetéhez [Data on the History of Turkish-Tatar Prisoners]," *Századok* 19 (1885) 579–689 and 655–661. These two lists were completed by Rezső Nagy, who collected letters by prisoners of the Tatars that had been published in various periodicals; see *A krimi tatár rabok történetéről* [On the History of Prisoners Kept by the Crimean Tatars]. Losoncz, 1918.

⁶³A later remark on the document: "This is a list of the notables who fell into Tatar hands in Poland, 1657. Those who went there with young György Rákóczi and were captured there in the Hungarian camp." From Gábor Bethlen's (1613–1629) archives in Keresd published by Imre Lukinich, "II. Rákóczi György lengyel hadjárata alkalmával tatár fogságba esett erdélyiek jegyzéke [A List of Transylvanians Taken into Tatar Captivity during the Polish Campaign of György Rákóczi II]," *Genealógiai Füzetek* 10 (1912) 93.

⁶⁴Sándor Szilágyi, "Kemény János és a krimiai rabok levelei [János Kemény and Letters of the Captives in the Crimea]," *Történelmi Tár* 1882, 614. Farkas Deák, "Okiratok a török-tatár rabok történetéhez [Documents on the History of Turkish-Tatar Prisoners]," *Történelmi Tár* 1886, 110–126.

their seizure or else on their arrival in the Crimea, but these were not released until the ransoms for the two chief commanders, Kemény and Kornis, were agreed upon.⁶⁵ At least half the ransom had to be in hand for the prisoner to be let out on bail. For János Kemény the unrealistically high amount of 400,000 *thalers* (200,000 golden florins) was asked. This was later reduced to 300,000 *thalers*, and eventually about 100,000 *thalers* were paid for his release.⁶⁶ In April 1658, the Diet noted that the ransom to be paid for Ferenc Kornis was 60,000 *thalers*, a sum that fell to 40,000 in the end.⁶⁷ For Kemény and Kornis as for so many other Transylvanian nobles, it was again Mihnea, the Voivode of Wallachia (1658–1659), who intervened or stood surety.⁶⁸ The voivodes had greater experience in this area and undertook an important role in freeing the most noted Transylvanian prisoners. In exchange for the money put up by the voivodes, bailsmen were left with them.⁶⁹ The repayment of the money advanced was protracted, and many remained indebted to the voivodes and to their Hungarian scribe, Máté Stan, who went to the

⁶⁵Kemény János *önéletrása*, 371–372.

⁶⁶Kraus claims that the ransoms paid for János Kemény and Ferenc Kornis together amounted to 90,000 *thalers*: “This sum was decided by the Diet and paid by the country, with our town of Segesvár contributing 14,000 *thalers*” (*Erdélyi krónika*, 281). The documents of the Diet and the autobiography of Kemény both put the ransom paid for him at 116,000 *thalers*. *EOE* XI. 372. When he described to his family the arrangements for his release, he mentioned a sum of around 100,000 *thalers*, of which the ransom due to the khan was 80,000 with the rest going to the Tatar notables who had made efforts on his behalf; see “Kemény János utasítása tatár rabságban [The Instructions Given by János Kemény during His Tatar Captivity],” *Hon és Külföld* 2:56–57 (1842) 219–220 and *EOE* XII. 289–290. The Moldavian *logofet*, Volkul, also contributed 1,500 gold coins towards Kemény’s ransom. Letter of Eustratie Dabija, Voivode of Moldavia (1661–1665), to Mihály Apafi. May 20, 1665. MOL P 1239 Apafi Mihály Gyűjtemény, box I. fol. 88.

⁶⁷*EOE* XI. 372 and *EOE* XII. 289–290.

⁶⁸Letter of Mihnea, Voivode of Wallachia, to János Kemény in the Crimea, January 1, 1659. P. Szathmáry, “A gyerőmonostori Báró Kemény-család fejedelmi ágának okmánytára,” 131, 134. The members of the Kemény family gave letters of guarantee to the bailsmen but the voivode – as a later handwritten remark by Kemény reveals – did not accept them (*ibid.*, 133).

⁶⁹Kemény recommended his son Ferenc and Tamás Damokos his son Gábor as guarantors for the voivode. “Kemény János utasítása tatár rabságban,” 219. *SzOkl* VI. 297.

Crimea together with Máté Balog to do everything possible to secure the freeing of the prisoners.⁷⁰

Having been notified that his indemnity was collected, a prisoner was taken to Jászvásár (Iași) either by his Tatar owner or by an Armenian, a Greek or – less frequently – a Jewish mediator.⁷¹ When a Tatar was sent, he was never given the ransom in one sum lest he should be so bold as to increase the price agreed; instead, the family gave it in portions.⁷² In return for the money collected, the mediator left something with the family as security until the prisoner was presented. The fee of the mediator was usually paid in cash, but some undertook the job for a horse.⁷³ The ransom was to be collected by the family. Most often the estates of the prisoner were put in pawn, and the lender was entitled to seize livestock worth twice as much as the debt and to retain it until the debt was discharged. When a wife put her own goods in pawn, she had a right to the husband's property up to the value of the goods pawned.⁷⁴

The earliest to be released were the prisoners kept by Ottomans in Akkerman. They returned in October 1657.⁷⁵ Some of the magnates in captivity in the Crimea who featured on Kemény's list were present at the Transylvanian Diet as early as in November that year.⁷⁶ Intent on obtaining the ransoms as soon as possible, the Tatars did not wish to hold

⁷⁰Letter of the Moldavian voivode Eustratie Dabija to Mihály Apafi, dated March 26, 1662, complaining that his confidential servant the scribe Máté had ransomed several Transylvanian prisoners partly on his own money and partly on that that raised by way of a usurious loan. Their debts exceeded 800–900 *thalers*. He was asking the prince to order the Transylvanians thus freed – Zsigmond Orbán, István Angyalossi, György Lészai, László Donát, and László Kálnoki – to pay what they owed. MOL P 1239 Apafi Mihály Gyűjtemény, box I. fol. 44. Apafi must have seen to the matter quickly, because on May 19 his captain in Fogaras informed him that he had summoned György Lészai in the matter of his debt. *SzOkl* VI. 274.

⁷¹In Caffa, an Armenian called Patoczki and his son Zakarias were engaged in the ransoming of Hungarian prisoners. *SzOkl* IV. 1264–1707. Ed. by Szabó Károly, published by Lajos Szádeczky. Kolozsvár, 1895, 293.

⁷²*SzOkl* VI. 224.

⁷³István Balló, "Tatár rabság [Tatar Captivity]," *Történelmi Tár* 1899, 381. *SzOkl* VI. 224.

⁷⁴*EOE* XIV. Budapest, 1889, 400.

⁷⁵Mózes Székely, Ferenc Daczó, Mátyás Imecz, and the scribe István – all of them prisoners of Ali pasha and Karaman Mehmed pasha in Ismail – were freed on October 4, 1657. *SzOkl* VI. 210–211.

⁷⁶E.g. Tamás Basa, see *EOE* XI. 320.

the commoners long either. The quickest way of obtaining money was for a Tatar to free a captive against guarantees undertaken by other captives. These guarantors ran high risks because when a prisoner delegated to bring a ransom failed to return, the amount of it was passed on to them. Four months were allotted to raise the funds. If such a furloughed prisoner died during this period, it was the owner's loss, but the corpse had to be presented at the court of the Voivode of Moldavia as proof. If that was impossible, the Prince of Transylvania and the country's bishop had to write certificates about the death. If a released captive failed to return or died after the four months had expired, his ransom – if still unpaid – was imposed upon those standing surety for him. There must have been several cases of furloughed prisoners not returning because a law had to be passed by the Transylvanian Diet to punish those who left their guarantors in the lurch.⁷⁷

Together with János Kemény, some of the magnates (including György Cserei and László Cseffi) also returned home in 1659, but a greater number of noblemen were freed only in the early 1660s. They included Mihály Apafi, later Prince of Transylvania, who arrived home to his wife on November 8, 1660. He had paid a ransom of 12,000 *thalers* and was freed with the help of Stefan, Voivode of Moldavia.⁷⁸ By 1662, most had arrived back. Their ransoms were collected in a variety of ways. Those wanting freedom as soon as possible asked their families to put their estates in pawn and to take out loans. Others endured captivity and waited for the necessary sum to be accumulated from the yield of their estates.⁷⁹ For the lesser nobility with small holdings of land, neither solution was possible. For them, the long reign of Prince Mihály Apafi I (1661–1690) provided the opportunity to return home. Apafi, who had

⁷⁷The most detailed description of the practices concerning guarantee can be found in a letter written by 16 Hungarian prisoners of *Ak mirza* and *San mirza* to the Prince of Transylvania in 1658. In it they beg the prince to round up their fellow-prisoner delegates in Transylvania and, if they were alive, to send them back. Szilágyi, “Kemény János és a krimiai rabok levelei,” 614–615. By the way, a year or two earlier *San mirza* was a paid mercenary on the side of János Kemény. *Kemény János önéletírása*, 300. The Diet assembling in Beszterce in 1659 and in Szászrégen in 1660 passed laws on guarantee. *EOE* XII. 221, 486.

⁷⁸Lajos Szádeczky, “Apafi Mihály naplója [The Diary of Mihály Apafi],” *Erdélyi Múzeum* 17 (1900) 82–93, 142–155, 214–221, 271–281, 325–335.

⁷⁹Pál Béli and, despite torture, Zsigmond Putnoki chose this way. Deák, “Okiratok,” 121.

been in captivity for nearly four years, remained in touch with Karaş *beg*, his former Tatar master, until 1680, as his diary suggests, although his terse entries do not reveal more in connection with this. It is not known whether Karaş *beg* mediated between the prisoner-turned-prince and the khan, but it is certain that the organised liberation of the prisoners was arranged by Apafi around 1670. It was not the central budget of the state that financed their redemption. Apafi had them sought out, and also mediated between Armenian moneylenders and the slaves to be freed (or possibly stood surety for them?). In 1668, he sent Bálint Kónya to the khan in a delegation led by György Cserei that asked free movement in the Crimea in order to register the prisoners there.⁸⁰ For the money borrowed from the Armenians, Kónya brought 18 prisoners back from the Tatars. The loan, however, could not be repaid in five years, even after several notices urging payment.⁸¹ In 1673, many still must have been in captivity because the prince dispatched György Cserei and Pál Béldi⁸² to negotiate about their liberation with the Armenians. Béldi informed Prince Apafi of the “resolution of the noble assembly concerning the ransom for the prisoners” that a prisoner was only obliged to pay half the ransom (*capitalis summa*), and that in addition to this, the Armenian, who redeemed him should be reimbursed for the charges paid in customs duty, the thirtieth and the cost of his meals from him.⁸³ This was to sanction an unwritten law, since three years before György Balogh of Transylvania

⁸⁰*TMÁOT* IV. Ed. by Áron Szilády – Sándor Szilágyi. Pest, 1870, 430. It is not quite clear who sent the Transylvanian mediators István Görög of Szila and István Kavacz of Illye in 1665, Márton László in 1668, and Lukács Kis in 1669 on missions to the Crimea, in addition to the prince’s envoys Máté Balog and Bálint Kónya. Deák, “Okiratok,” 123–124. In 1670, György Balogh was sent by György Cserei. *SzOkI* VI. 324.

⁸¹The three Armenians Aydın, Sinan and Nazar mentioned in the letter of the khan’s *aga*, Ali, to Mihály Apafi appear to be Muslims on the basis of their names. MOL Erdélyi Guberniumi Levéltár, Cista Diplomatica F 126. No. 349. The Hungarian translation of the document is defective: *TMÁOT* VII. 369.

⁸²Both were former prisoners released by the Tatars. Béldi was redeemed for a heavy ransom. In her letter to Mihály Apafi (December 29, 1660), Béldi’s wife, Zsuzsanna Vitéz, mentioned 23,300 *thalers* and asked the prince to intervene with the voivode so that the latter might stand surety for her husband. MOL P 1239 Apafi Mihály Gyűjtemény, box I. fol. 2.

⁸³MOL P 669 Béldi cs. lvt. [Archives of the Béldi family], June 26, 1673. fols. 13–14. In the postscript to his letter, Béldi refers to Cserei’s report (*relatio*), which I was unable to find even after a long search.

had been commissioned by Cserei on similar terms to bring back prisoners. Cserei borrowed the money from Armenians at usurious interest that asked for every *thaler* lent one gold coin as repayment, meaning a profit of 100 per cent, since at that time a golden florin was worth two *thalers*. Balogh also charged a fee for his services, and when the prisoner accepted it, a contract note was completed concerning the ransom and the mediation cost that was countersigned by witnesses. There is a contract dated April 10, 1670 in which István Göcs was obliged to pay not only 92 golden florins for a ransom of 92 *thalers*, but also to recompense György Balogh for his efforts by paying 32 *thalers*, as well as the customs duties and charges incurred on the way home, thus generating a profit of 100 per cent. Should he fail to pay the money in three weeks, the debt would be doubled, and in the event of non-payment of this, György Cserei and György Balogh would be entitled to seize all his goods. Should these goods fail to cover the debt, they would have the right to seize Göcs himself. István Göcs took an oath accepting this in front of witnesses.⁸⁴ For Béldi and Cserei, these undertakings were lucrative because they could turn the prisoners into their supporters and they could obtain estates when captives failed to pay. At the same time, they do not seem to have abused the prisoners in their helplessness. Béldi, for instance, kept prisoners as his “employees” with a decent salary.⁸⁵

Prisoners were freed at a safe place in Jászvásár (Iași) in Moldavia. They were also given a certificate of manumission, confirming that they had paid their ransoms. In the letter of liberation issued on May 31, 1661, Hacı Asım *beg* acknowledged that his prisoner Mihály Tarcsafalvi had given his ransom – 200 *thalers* and 8 bolts of cloth – and that therefore no one should dare to harass him. A bolt of broadcloth cost 18 florins or 36 *thalers* at this time.⁸⁶ Mihály Tarcsafalvi was released for a total of 200 plus 288 *thalers*, with the result that he nearly paid his reduced ransom of 500 *thalers* (the amount originally demanded was 1,000

⁸⁴*SzOkl* VI. 324–325. The amount of the customs duty is not established, but it is known from Cserei’s contract that it meant another 15 *thalers*. Magyarai, “Adatok Kemény János életéhez,” 491.

⁸⁵János Posgay’s and Ferenc Bene’s letters of contract to Béldi, dated 1661 and 1670 respectively; see Deák, *op. cit.*, 115–116, 125.

⁸⁶Iván Nagy, “Árucikkék szabályzata 1627 és 1706 évekből [Regulations Governing the Prices of Goods in 1627 and 1706],” *Magyar Történelmi Tár* 18[2:6] (1871) 211.

thalers).⁸⁷ From Mihály Tarcsafalvi Hacı Asım *beg* earned at least the price of five prisoners in four years. It was surer income than going to war. This explains why the Tatars sometimes kept the Hungarian prisoners for as long as a decade. Although the letters often mention ransoms and torture, one never finds allusion to noblemen being put to work. The Tatars probably got the commoners, whose redemption was not hoped for, to perform slave labour.

At present, 275 people are known by name. Eight probably returned with Rákóczi, another eight escaped, nine died, one went missing, three were killed in combat, and one was exchanged for a Tatar with a value of 380 *thalers*.⁸⁸ The sources are explicit about the ransom for 68 of the remaining 245 people. Grouping the ransom amounts, one finds them relatively standardised. The bottom category includes ransoms below 100 *thalers*, possibly for elderly prisoners (five cases); amounts around 150, 200, and 300 *thalers* are prevalent (19, 12 and 15 cases respectively – 46 altogether), and nine prisoners were released for sums between 400 and 600 *thalers*. Ransoms of 1,000 *thalers* are mentioned in only two cases, while the top category – excluding the extremely high indemnities for the two chief commanders – contains four cases of ransoms at 5,000–23,000 *thalers*. The total ransom sum for these 66 persons was 64,531 *thalers*; together with Kemény's ransom of 100,000 *thalers* and Kornis's ransom of 40,000 *thalers* it came to 204,531 *thalers*, or 102,265 golden florins.⁸⁹ That, however, was only the ransom for a quarter of the 245 persons known by name. The two chief commanders paid 70 per cent of the 100,000 gold coins, 66 persons the remaining 30 per cent. If we draw the circle even closer by omitting the ransoms above 1,000 *thalers* (six individuals), we arrive at 14,031 *thalers* (around 7,000 golden florins) for

⁸⁷In a letter dated August 31, 1659, Tarcsafalvi wrote that his ransom was 1,000 *thalers*, whereas in his letter dated January 2, 1661 he mentioned it as being only 500 *thalers*, 300 of it in cash plus a horse and broadcloth. *SzOkl* IV. 293–294, 300.

⁸⁸Deák, “Adatok a török tatár rabok történetéhez,” 586. There are other sources confirming that, for lack of money, Bucak Tatars kept in Hungarian fortresses promised the liberation of Hungarian captives instead of their ransom. “Prisoners with Tatar names. From Bucak. They promised to bring four Hungarian prisoners from the Tatar territories whose ransom is 300 *thalers* each.” MOL P72 Csáky cs. Ivt. [Archives of the Csáky family] Fasc. 652. fols. 291–293 (February 27, 1663). The document was put at my disposal by Géza Pálffy, to whom I express my gratitude.

⁸⁹This amount is very close to the sum estimated by Kraus (*op. cit.*, 282), who claims that more than 200,000 *thalers* were paid in ransom for the Transylvanians.

60 persons, an average of 233 *thalers*/120 golden florins for one. This outcome seems realistic, for according to Broniewski, those who wished to avoid the galleys needed to offer two or three times as much as the price (40–50 gold coins) obtained for a person by the Tatars in Caffa.⁹⁰ Assuming that the remaining 177 people with unknown ransoms did not include high-ranking persons and that they were also freed for the average 233 *thalers*/120 golden florins, then one has to reckon with payment of a further 41,241 *thalers*, i.e. roughly 20,000 golden florins. Thus, the Tatars received altogether 245,772 *thalers*, i.e. around 123,000 golden florins, for the Transylvanian prisoners – nobles and commoners – known by name.

The sum of 123,000 golden florins was very high, and of this 100,000 was demonstrably paid and the rest presumably. Prior to 1658, this sum was equivalent to the tribute paid by Transylvania to the Porte over an eight-year period (15,000 golden florins annually), but was still three times Transylvania's tribute following the increase of this to 40,000 golden florins a year in 1658. About 4,000 people are hypothesised to have been captured at Tremblowa. Many of these must have escaped, died or remained in captivity for lack of ransom money. Let us suppose that only a quarter of the 4,000 were redeemed, and that this quarter included the 245 people known by name. Let us also assume that the remaining 755 prisoners did not include specifically valuable ones, and that the average price paid was 233 *thalers* per person. In this way, the sum of 175,915 *thalers*/80,000 golden florins can be arrived at for the 755 prisoners. Adding together the 245,772 *thalers* paid for the slaves known by name, the 175,915 *thalers* given for the 755 prisoners and the 21,000 *thalers* paid before the enslavement in Poland, we arrived at a grand total of 342,687 *thalers*, i.e. 170,000 golden florins, paid to the Tatars (and the troops from Bucak and Akkerman in support of them). Although the calculation errs on the side of caution, this figure is incredibly high.

Obviously, not every campaign closed with such huge and valuable booty. Yet one cannot help asking where all this money from the slave trade went to. Some of it most probably flowed on to Istanbul, to pay for the retention or acquisition of the khan's title. It must have also cost much that contrary to the demand of the Grand Vizier, the commander-in-chief, János Kemény was not delivered to the Porte. Although the khan

⁹⁰Broniewski, *op. cit.*, 363.

was inclined to hand him over, the other leaders of the Khanate and the clan chieftains objected. They had other plans with Kemény: they wanted him to be elected Prince of Transylvania.⁹¹

The attempt of the Crimean khans to collect tribute from Moldavia, Wallachia and Transylvania and to assume the role of the weakening Ottomans in inaugurating the rulers of these three territories can be traced back to the late sixteenth century.⁹² In the first half of the seventeenth century, the Crimean khans found their match in the princes of Transylvania, who, too, wished to assert their influence in South-Eastern Europe through voivodes they had helped to power there and through the Cossacks. Undoubtedly, Rákóczi's defeat in Poland and his army's capture by the Tatars shifted the balance of power in favour of the Tatars. They, however, failed to profit from this state of affairs, for under the grand vizierates of the Köprülü, the Ottoman Empire was also temporarily bolstered and its control over its vassals restored. Vivid testimony to the Ottoman–Tatar rivalry in Transylvania is the much-quoted letter from Grand Vizier Köprülü Mehmed pasha to the Transylvanian Estates asking them to hurry to his camp because he wished to raise Ákos Barcsay to the throne of the principality, thus thwarting Kemény, who was supported by the Tatars.⁹³ It is noteworthy that when the Porte rejected Kemény's candidacy for the throne, his good contacts with both the Habsburg Emperor and the Hungarian magnates, his sovereign personality and his captivity at the court of the Tatar khan were equally weighty arguments against him.⁹⁴

⁹¹Kemény's letter to György Rákóczi, in Sidó Castle, November 8, 1657. *Történelmi Tár* 1882, 596–597.

⁹²Mária Ivanics, *A Krími Kánság a tizenöt éves háborúban* [The Crimean Khanate in the Fifteen Years War]. (Kőrösi Csoma Kiskönyvtár, 22.) Budapest, 1994.

⁹³Nagy, "Rédei László történeti maradványai", 62–63. In the section on the events of 1661, Kraus gave a detailed account of the rivalry between the khan and the Ottoman leaders (*op. cit.*, 431–432).

⁹⁴S. von Reniger's report of March 30, 1661, Constantinople: "They do not want János Kemény at all. Firstly (as far as I can see) because he was a slave (*Sclaf*) of the Tatar khan, secondly because he is from the country of His Imperial Majesty (as the pasha of Várad reported) and because he is in correspondence with the Palatine (i.e. the viceroy), and thirdly because he has offended the Porte by rising to power by his own authority, despite the Porte's will. If Transylvania is intent on peace, then it must choose another prince." HHStA Staatskanzlei Türkei, Karton 133. Konv. 1. fol. 93a.

This is only seemingly contradicted by the fact that Kemény's successor as Prince of Transylvania, Mihály Apafi, also rose to the throne from Tatar imprisonment. First of all, Apafi was never the captive of the khan. Nor did he ascend the throne from the Crimea; rather, the pasha of Temesvár, Ali, had him elected by the Transylvanian Diet. The Tatars, however, did not omit to warn Apafi that he had to take Tatar interests into account. "Thanks be to God, you are not like the others; you know the Crimea and are a clever man," wrote Sefer Gazi, the *aga* of the khan, to Mihály Apafi in a letter congratulating him on his election as prince.⁹⁵ The above outline of Transylvanian–Tatar–Ottoman relations shows that the Tatar captivity of Transylvanians had not only a financial but also a political aspect, one which sharply differentiated the Transylvanians from their Russian and Polish companions in distress.

⁹⁵*Elhamduli'l-lahi taala siz gayriler gibi deęilsiz Kırımı görmiřsiz ve siz akil adamsız.* Arhivele Statului Bucureřti, Documente Turęesti XXII. 2104. June 25, 1662.

MALTESE PIRATES, OTTOMAN CAPTIVES
AND FRENCH TRADERS IN THE EARLY
SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY MEDITERRANEAN

PÁL FODOR

Mediterranean historians consider the one hundred years between 1580 and 1680 to have been one of the golden ages of piracy. During this period, in addition to the many local “entrepreneurs”,¹ four large and distinct groups distinguished themselves in this peculiar form of commerce. In the Adriatic Sea (in Dalmatia) the so-called *uskoks* (South Slav refugees) established an organisation specialising in piracy. Despite their limited numbers, by the end of the sixteenth century they were able – with Habsburg and Papal support – to cause enormous damage to Venetian and Turkish shipping.² A second large centre of piracy developed in North Africa – or in Barbary as it was known in the West at the time. As their independence from Istanbul increased, the city-ports of Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli began to use their military and economic power for predatory raids. The Barbary corsairs were active primarily in the western basin of the Mediterranean, but they also ventured as far as the Adriatic and the Levant and in the seventeenth century they extended their search

¹Nicolas Vatin, “L’Empire ottoman et la piraterie en 1559–1560,” in *The Kapudan Pasha. His Office and His Domain*. Ed. by Elisabeth Zachariadou. Rethymnon, 2002, 371–408.

²Ekkehard Eickhoff, “Die Uskokken in der Adria. Ein Kapitel südosteuropäischer Seegeschichte,” *Annales Universitatis Saraviensis* 5:3–4 (1956) 196–226. Alberto Tenenti, *Piracy and the Decline of Venice 1580–1615*. Transl. by Janet and Brian Pullan. London, 1967, 3–15. Maurice Aymard, “XVI. yüzyılın sonunda Akdeniz’de korsanlık ve Venedik,” *İstanbul Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası* 23:1–2 (1962) 220–223. Kálmán Benda, “Les uscoques entre Venise, la porte ottomane et la Hongrie,” in *Venezia e Ungheria nel contesto del barocco europeo*. Firenze, 1979, 399–408. Catherine Wendy Bracewell, *The Uskoks of Senj. Piracy, Banditry, and Holy War in the Sixteenth Century-Adriatic*. Ithaca, London, 1992. On the Ottoman reactions to the worsening situation in the Adriatic, see Suraiya Faroqhi, “Ottoman Views on Corsairs and Piracy in the Adriatic,” in *The Kapudan Pasha*, 357–370.

for booty to the Atlantic Ocean as well.³ The third group comprised two military orders, sometimes operating in alliance with each other. The first of these, the Knights of the Order of Saint Stephen, had been established in 1562 by Cosimo Medici in Pisa and in Leghorn. The second order, the prestigious Knights of the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, had settled on the island of Malta in 1530. After 1580 both orders switched their main area of activity from the West to the Eastern Mediterranean.⁴ Finally, a fourth group comprised the so-called northerners, that is, Englishmen and Dutchmen who, again after 1580, joined in the piracy on the “inland sea”. The English pursued banditry as a kind of supplement to their commercial and carrying activities. However, the merciless violence applied by them was a considerable factor in their having pushed Venice and France into the background and their having controlled most of the trade in the Mediterranean by 1610.⁵

³Otto Eck, *Seeräuberei im Mittelmeer. Dunkle Blätter europäischer Geschichte*. München, Berlin, 1940, esp. 135–188. Sir Godfrey Fisher, *Barbary Legend. War, Trade and Piracy in North Africa 1415–1830*. Oxford, 1957. Salvatore Bono, *I corsari barbareschi*. Torino, 1964. Tenenti, *op. cit.*, 16–31. Aymard, *op. cit.*, 223–225. Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*. II. New York, Hagestown, San Francisco, London, 1972, 880–886. Peter Earle, *Corsairs of Malta and Barbary*. London, 1970, 23–94. Jamil M. Abun-Nasr, *A History of the Maghrib in the Islamic Period*. Cambridge, New York, etc, 1987, 159, 165–166. Michel Fontenay, “La place de la course dans l’économie portuaire: l’exemple de Malte et des ports barbaresques,” *Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations* 43:6 (1988) 1321–1347. Andreas Rieger, *Die Seeaktivitäten der muslimischen Beutefahrer als Bestandteil der staatlichen Flotte während der osmanischen Expansion im Mittelmeer im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert*. (Islamkundliche Untersuchungen, 174.) Berlin, 1994, 36–443. Daniel Panzac, *Les corsaires barbaresques. La fin d’une épopée 1800–1820*. Paris, 1999.

⁴Bono, *op. cit.*, 116–135. Tenenti, *op. cit.*, 32–55. Aymard, *op. cit.*, 225–226. Braudel, *op. cit.*, 872–880. Earle, *op. cit.*, 97–271. Michel Fontenay, “L’Empire ottoman et le risque corsaire au XVII^e siècle,” *Revue d’histoire moderne et contemporaine* 32 (1985) 185–208. Idem, “La place de la course,” 1321–1347. Idem, “Corsaires de la fois ou rentiers du sol? Les Chevaliers de Malte dans le ‘corso’ méditerranéen au XVII^e siècle,” *Revue d’histoire moderne et contemporaine* 35 (1988) 361–384.

⁵Fisher, *op. cit.*, 137 ff. Tenenti, *op. cit.*, 56–86. Aymard, *op. cit.*, 227–229. Braudel, *op. cit.*, I. 621–642. Carlo M. Cipolla, “The Economic Decline of Italy,” in *Crisis and Change in the Venetian Economy in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*. Edited with an introduction by Brian Pullan. London, 1968, 127–145. Richard Tilden Rapp, “The Unmaking of the Mediterranean Trade Hegemony: International Trade Rivalry and the Commercial Revolution,” *The Journal of Economic History* 35 (1975) 499–525. Paul Masson, *Histoire du commerce français dans le Levant. Au XVII^e siècle*. Paris, 1896, 27–

There is a considerable controversy about the nature and extent of piracy in the Mediterranean and the impact on commerce of such warfare. Some scholars have maintained, for example, that maritime banditry considerably contributed to the weakening and eventual decline of Venetian shipping.⁶ As regards the Ottoman Empire, others have been of the opinion that these predatory actions inflicted losses that were far from being irrecoverable. As the Venetian ambassador wrote in 1641, the Maltese and Tuscan corsairs caused more irritation than pain to the Ottomans.⁷ At the same time, a general consensus seems to exist concerning the underlying causes of the phenomenon: the Mediterranean piracy (*corso*) was the attempt of impoverished societies excluded from the main stream of development to compensate themselves – at least in part – for the losses caused by the commercial ascendancy of the northerners.⁸ The partial success of this attempt is demonstrated by the fact that while the old commercial ports (such as Barcelona, Genoa, and Venice, etc) stagnated or declined during the seventeenth century, the

47, 118–135. Susan A. Skilliter, *William Harborne and the Trade with Turkey, 1578–1582: A Documentary Study of the First Anglo-Ottoman Relations*. London, 1977. Alfred C. Wood, *A History of the Levant Company*. London, 1964². Alexander H. de Groot, *The Ottoman Empire and the Dutch Republic: A History of the Earliest Diplomatic Relations, 1610–1630*. Leiden, İstanbul, 1978. Niels Steensgaard, “The Dutch East India Company as an Institutional Innovation,” in *Dutch Capitalism and World Capitalism*. Publ. sous la direction de Maurice Aymard. Cambridge, Paris, 1982, 235–257. *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300–1914*. Edited by Halil İnalcık with Donald Quataert. Cambridge, 1994, 364–379, 487 ff, esp. 505–506, 520–524.

⁶Tenenti, *op. cit.*, 3–86. Cf. Idem, *Naufraques, corsaires et assurances maritimes à Venise 1592–1609*. Paris, 1959, 11–65.

⁷Quoted by Michel Fontenay, “Chiourmes turques au XVII^e siècle,” in *Le genti del mare Mediterraneo (XVII^e Colloque international d’histoire maritime. Napoli, 1980)*. Napoli, 1981, 880. Cf. Idem, “Corsaires de la fois,” 366.

⁸Fontenay, “La place de la course,” 1324–1325. Idem, “The Mediterranean, 1500–1800: Social and Economic Perspectives,” in *Hospitaller Malta 1530–1798. Studies on Early Modern Malta and the Order of St John of Jerusalem*. Ed. by Victor Mallia-Milanes. Malta, 1993, 75–76. For the parallel phenomenon of continental banditry all around the Mediterranean, see Braudel, *op. cit.*, II, 734–756. Henry Kamen, *The Iron Century. Social Change in Europe 1550–1660*. London, 1971, esp. 331–426. Fikret Adanır, “Heiduckentum und osmanische Herrschaft. Sozialgeschichtliche Aspekte der Diskussion um das frühneuzeitliche Räuberwesen in Südosteuropa,” *Südost-Forschungen* 41 (1982) 43–116. William J. Griswold, *The Great Anatolian Rebellion 1000–1020/1591–1611*. (Islamkundliche Untersuchungen, 83.) Berlin, 1983.

ports that did switch to piracy underwent a certain amount of development.⁹ Of course, this was largely because ports in this second group enjoyed the support of the northerners and of Marseilles, a centre that continued to remain commercially competitive. This was also true of Malta, the capital of Christian piracy – as Peter Earle called it –, an island that acquired this distinguished title while relying upon the support of a whole range of trading centres including Sicily, Naples, Leghorn, Venice, and Marseilles. It is indicative that whereas most of the Mediterranean societies experienced a severe demographic crisis in the seventeenth century, Malta's population rose from about 32,000 in 1590 to almost 60,000 in 1670.¹⁰

In the following article I shall examine one aspect of the Maltese pirate-economy, namely the capturing and ransoming of Ottoman subjects, and the commercial and political interests that lay behind such transactions. This part of my study was based on a collection of documents preserved in the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris. In all likelihood, the collection was once the property of Jean Dupuy, French consul in İzmir between 1626 and 1651.¹¹ The “defter” in question contains 36 Ottoman legal certificates (*temessük* or *hüccet*). The importance of the material lies in the fact that twenty-seven of the thirty-six documents were issued by four different Ottoman *kadıs* held captive on Malta. The certificates contain acknowledgments on the part of Ottoman subjects (made on their release from captivity) that they had taken out loans with the French consul in İzmir or with his agents living in Malta in order to pay off their ransoms. Since to my knowledge such documentary evidence has not surfaced before, we may now for the first time have an insight into the operation of a very interesting and hitherto little known ransom organisation.¹² However, before addressing this issue, I should like to evoke a number of important features of Maltese piracy.

⁹Fontenay, “La place de la course,” 1324. Idem, “The Mediterranean,” 77. With its 100,000 inhabitants Algiers was larger than Genoa, Marseilles, Barcelona, and Leghorn in the seventeenth century.

¹⁰Fontenay, “La place de la course,” 1325, 1343: notes 7–8, 10, and 12, 1345. Idem, “The Mediterranean,” 61, 77.

¹¹Bibliothèque nationale de Paris, Département des manuscrits, manuscrits orientaux, fonds turc. 1234.

¹²As an order issued by the Ottoman Imperial Council on October 21, 1564 suggests western ambassadors in Istanbul may have been engaged in such activity previously, too.

In the 1620s Maltese piracy was operating as a well-established system.¹³ Within this system a clear distinction was made between ventures of the knights connected with their compulsory military service and the sea voyages that were organised by private entrepreneurs with the permission of the Order and flying under its flag. At first sight the Order's fleet seems to have been astonishingly small: in the sixteenth century, it comprised just four galleys. This number rose to five in 1596, to six in 1628, to seven in 1651 and to eight in 1685.¹⁴ On the other hand, these ships were among the best equipped in the whole of the Mediterranean and they also had the most determined crews.¹⁵ The primary tasks of this maritime force were to guard the Christian waters: every year for several weeks the galleys patrolled the straits of Malta, the Tyrranean Sea, the area around Sicily, and the entrance to the Adriatic. Whenever the European powers established a crusader naval force, the Maltese always joined it. Nevertheless, in the seventeenth century the Knights Hospitaller considered piracy to be the most effective form of fighting against the Muslims. About 500 members of the Order living on Malta took part in a number of different ways in this strange war. In order to rise within the Order's hierarchy, the knights had to complete four so-called full *caravans*, that is, they had to fulfil four terms of service, each lasting six months, at sea on one of the Order's galleys. Thus, 25–30 knights were always to be found on board the various galleys who mainly spent their tour of service looting and pillaging Levantine shipping.¹⁶ The prize was due to the Order itself, and thus for most of the knights these actions brought no more than fame and honour. With regard to the material or financial rewards of the *corso*, we are very much in the dark, for there is little data that can be statistically evaluated. Although there were no doubt a few large strikes, it would seem that the proceeds were

Cf. 6 numaralı mühimme defteri (972/1564–1565) <Tıpkıbasım>. <Özet – transkripsiyon ve indeks> I–II. (Dîvân-i hümayûn sicilleri dizisi, 3.) Ankara, 1995, No. 274.

¹³On this, see mainly the pioneering work by Earle (*op. cit.*, 97–191) and the studies of Fontenay who supplements Earle's description in many respects.

¹⁴Fontenay, "Corsaires de la fois," 365.

¹⁵For the famous carrack of the Knights, see H. J. A. Sire, *The Knights of Malta*. New Haven, London, 1996, 87–88.

¹⁶The number of compulsory *caravans* were three in the sixteenth as well as in the eighteenth century. Cf. Fontenay, "Corsaires de la fois," 372. Earle, *op. cit.*, 106. Sire, *op. cit.*, 83.

far outweighed by the costs of such ventures. In 1630, for example, when the costs of maintaining the Maltese fleet amounted to 150,000–200,000 piaster, the Order's annual income from piracy (excluding galley slaves) was estimated to be 9,000 piaster (12,000 écu).¹⁷ In circa 1660 the income may have been a mere 15,000 piaster (20,000 écu).¹⁸

In contrast, the maritime voyages of the private corsairs sailing from Malta were probably highly profitable. The activities of the privateers were regulated by a statute issued in 1605. Before setting sail for Barbary or for the Levant, a pirate ship needed to obtain the licence of the so-called *Tribunale degli Armamente* and the letters patent of the Grand Master. In addition, such vessels were required to fly the flag of the Order or of the Grand Master. The owner(s) and the captain of a ship had to undertake to refrain from causing damage to Christians, to submit a tenth of the prize to the Grand Master and to divide the rest of the prize according to the exact rules among other claimants of the Order, the captain, the crew, and the investors, and to submit themselves to the justice of the *Tribunale* in case of dispute.¹⁹ Between 1600 and 1624 the Order issued licences for 280 *corsos* (350 ships), which corresponds to an average of 14 ships annually. This number rose to between 20 and 25 in the period from 1660 until 1675, which we may consider the golden age of Maltese privateering.²⁰ Often the ventures were financed by investment companies of changing composition, in which a decisive role was played by a group of about 50 men (most of whom were or had been knights). Usually they provided the technical knowledge and capital needed for the *corso*, and where a greater investment was necessary, equity holders and bondholders were sought, who then received payment from the prize according to the rules mentioned above. We may conclude from a list of sold prize that around 1660 the Maltese *corso* brought in an annual income of about 120,000–150,000 piaster.²¹ Organised along mainly capitalist lines, until the mid-1670s these ventures were dominated by Frenchmen, Italians and other “foreigners” (many of the knights were also of French descent). However, an order issued by King Louis XIV

¹⁷At least according to Fontenay, “Corsaires de la fois,” 378. Idem, “La place de la course,” 1332.

¹⁸Fontenay, “La place de la course,” 1337. The figures quoted are very uncertain.

¹⁹Earle, *op. cit.*, 108 ff.

²⁰Fontenay, “Corsaires de la fois,” 367.

²¹Fontenay, “La place de la course,” 1336–1337.

(1643–1715) in 1679 compelled the French to give up piracy under Maltese flags.²² Although local entrepreneurs soon took their place, the Maltese *corso* began to decline. The island of Malta, the capital of piracy, became in the course of the eighteenth century a centre of trade and services and an important base for French commerce in the Levant.

Captives were considered to be the most valuable prize of the Maltese corsairs. We have few data concerning their exact numbers, but between 1660 and 1662 about 200 new captives were brought to the island annually; most of these men were Muslim and Ottoman subjects. Between 1655 and 1674, on average 125 Levantine slaves were registered every year in the Maltese quarantine but with the captives taken by the Order's ships the figure could have amounted to 200–250.²³ The number of men captured was probably substantially higher, for some of them were turned over to their relatives or local community on the spot in return for a high price. The others were transported to Malta, where they were first placed in quarantine and then – once the tithe had been paid to the Grand Master – offered for sale at open auctions. A large number of the captives were purchased by the Order itself and many of them were immediately put on the benches of the galleys. In 1632, on the six galleys of the Order, 1,284 galley-slaves were pulling on the oars.²⁴ The others were sent to work on fortress walls, or in workshops, convents and the palace of the Grand Master. Many captives were bought by Frenchmen, Spaniards, Neapolitans, and the Papal court as galley slaves. The knights and commoners living on the island also acquired large numbers of captives with a view to working them on their ships or in their shops and houses, or in order to rent them out.²⁵

However, most of those who acquired slaves did so with the intention of receiving a ransom at a later date. As in all the pirate port-cities around the Mediterranean, here too the greatest profits were to be made in ransom slavery. The various forms of ransoming corresponded almost

²²Fontenay, *Corsaires de la foi*, 383. Sire, *op. cit.*, 91.

²³Fontenay, "L'Empire ottoman et le risque corsaire," 195–196.

²⁴Earle, *op. cit.*, 169.

²⁵On the life of slaves on Malta, see Earle, *op. cit.*, 168–178. Cf. İsmet Parmaksızoğlu, "Bir Türk kadısının esaret hatıraları," *Tarih Dergisi* 5 (1953) 77–84. Walter Schmucker, "Die maltesischen Gefangenschaftserinnerungen eines türkischen Kadı vor 1599," *Archivum Ottomanicum* 2 (1970) 191–251. Cemil Çiftçi, *Macuncuzade Mustafa Efendi: Malta esirleri*. İstanbul, 1996.

exactly with the customs prevailing in North Africa, Central Europe (on the Hungarian–Ottoman border), and elsewhere, although there were a number of differences.²⁶ One of these differences was that in the Muslim world there were no institutions (or more exactly, they ceased to exist after the thirteenth century) dealing officially with redemption (like, for example, the Redemptionist Fathers in the Christian world).²⁷ The other difference was that the sultan’s court provided assistance only to the so-called “major captives” or to those with influential relatives or acquaintances.²⁸ This is what happened, for instance, in November 1590 when it promised to free six Maltese knights in return for the release of 29 Ottoman slaves in Malta.²⁹ Through the intervention of the mother of the sultan (*valide sultan*), the governor of Morea paid the considerable ransom, amounting to 500 golden florins, for the release of the mentioned Macuncuzade Mustafa *çelebi*, who became famous through his accounts of his captivity in Malta.³⁰ Under these circumstances Turks and Ottoman Jews taken to Malta could mainly rely on their relatives, acquaintances and businessmen specialising in redeeming slaves, who helped them make contact with their beloved and advanced the ransom if they saw any chance of getting their money back.³¹

²⁶For a summary of the ransom slavery in Hungary, see Géza Pálffy’s study in the present volume.

²⁷Bono, *op. cit.*, 267–349. Stephen Clissold, *The Barbary Slaves*. London, 1977, esp. 12–16, 102–129. Earle, *op. cit.*, 86–88. Rieger, *op. cit.*, 331–334. A remarkably useful study is Michel Fontenay, “Le Maghreb barbaresque et l’esclavage méditerranéen aux XV^e–XVII^e siècles,” *Les Cahiers de Tunisie* 44:157–158 (1991) 7–43. Cf. Bartolomé Bennassar – Lucile Bennassar, *Les Chrétiens d’Allah. L’histoire extraordinaire des renégats, XVI^e et XVII^e siècles*. Paris, 1989.

²⁸The Ottoman government’s attitude towards their subjects taken into captivity in Christian countries was studied in some detail by Nicolas Vatin, “Note sur l’attitude des sultans ottomans et de leurs sujets face à la captivité des leurs en terre chrétienne (fin XV^e–XVI^e siècle),” *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 82 (1992) 375–395. Cf. Idem, “Deux documents sur la libération de musulmans captifs chez les Francs (1573),” *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 83 (1993) 223–230. To my knowledge, the notion of “major captive or slave” is only applied by the Hungarian scholarly literature.

²⁹BOA MD 67, 73/20; 69, 280/140, 292/146, 297/149, 373/186.

³⁰Schmucker, *op. cit.*, 247.

³¹Some entrepreneurs acting on Malta, too, are mentioned by Earle, *op. cit.*, 89, 91, 168–169, 172, 174. Cf. Vatin, “Deux documents,” 225–227, 229–230. It is well known that in this branch of business the Jews of Leghorn established the biggest network. In the

From the documents mentioned above, one can gain an understanding of a similar, so far unknown business partnership concerned with redemption of slaves. The leader of the enterprise was probably Jean Dupuy, the French consul at İzmir, who assumed his office in 1626 and represented the interests of the French traders in the new, rapidly developing trading centre of the Levant until 1651.³² The partners of the consul lived on Malta and were traders (*tacir*) and captains (*kapudan*), at least according to the terms used by the *kadıs*. One of them was called Caki Viyal (probably Giacomo Vialli), the other was known as Covan Menzelet (possibly Giovanni Menzelet). The consul and his two Maltese trading partners acted as each other's legal representatives with full powers (*vekil-i şeriyye ve kaimakam*). Within three and a half years (from June 7, 1625 to November 19, 1628) they assisted 28 Ottoman captives in their endeavours to go home. An additional seven captives received money from their relatives through them. The majority of the redeemed slaves were from west and south-west Anatolia and the rest came from some islands of the Aegean (Rhodes and İstanköy/Kos). If the places of residence of those people whose names figured among the witnesses (either released in another way or still in captivity), and the places where the *kadıs* had previously worked are added to the list of the above settlements, one can gain an impression of the areas from where Ottoman subjects were taken into captivity by the Maltese during these years (see map).

As everywhere, the amount of ransom to be paid depended on the family background and financial means of the captive. Except for one case, the sums were given in *riyal guruş* (Spanish 8-real) to the prisoners. The three business associates lent altogether 12,736.5 *guruş* to the 28 prisoners, which is an enormous sum and indicates that the creditors were not afraid of taking high risks. The highest amount was given to Mustafa *çelebi* ibn Elhac Emrullah, resident of Bursa, who paid 1,091.5 *guruş* towards his release; the lowest sum was paid by Kavlı bin Elhac Musa,

late seventeenth-century Tunis, for example, in cooperation with their brethren, they ransomed the 44 per cent of the Christian slaves. Cf. Fontenay, "Le Maghreb barbaresque," 26–29.

³²Daniel Goffman, *Izmir and the Levantine World, 1550–1650*. Seattle, London, 1990, 120.

whose release cost 191 1/4 *guruş*.³³ The Ottoman captives paid 442 *guruş* on average for their freedom. This amount included three items: the ransom (*baha*), the so-called *kapu hakkı* (it was probably the price of the safe conduct written out in their name), and the charge for a ship's passage (*gemi* or *sefine kirası*). The breakdown of costs is exemplified by only one case: while Receb bin Zülfikar from Taraklı Yenicesi paid a 200 golden florins ransom (approximately 300 *guruş*), his letter of safe conduct and the charge for the ship's passage cost him an additional 54 *guruş*.³⁴

The ransom agreed and the additional costs were advanced sometimes by the consul, sometimes by the Maltese merchants, but always it was the latter two who handed the money to the slaves in the presence of a *kadı* held in captivity and many witnesses. In most cases the captives recognised the amount received as *deyn-i şeri*, that is, a loan sanctioned by Muslim religious law, and undertook to pay the entire amount back to the French consul as soon as they arrived at İzmir. Captives released concomitantly on a joint loan sometimes acted as surety for one another, but on the whole bailsmen were seldom named in the transactions. It is surprising that there was only one case where the redeeming company asked for interest to be paid. Four captives from Geyve to be repatriated pledged to pay 1,425 *guruş* back instead of the 950 *guruş* received jointly to the French consul, which is a 50 per cent interest. Assuming that the ransom dealers operated in the hope of gaining high profits rather than for humanitarian reasons,³⁵ one may conclude that in all other cases the captives acknowledged the receipt of sums that were higher than their actual debts and costs and thus the interest payment remained hidden. This assumption is supported by a certificate in which Bostan bin Yunus declared that he had received 470 *guruş* from the mentioned merchants "at an interest prevailing in the Muslim realm" (*diyar-i İslam muamelesi üzere*) and with this money he had liberated himself from the hand of the unbelievers. Because he undertook to repay precisely the same amount of money, it is obvious that his debt of 470 *guruş* comprised the interest as

³³Bibliothèque nationale de Paris, Département des manuscrits, manuscrits orientaux, fonds turc. 1234, pp. 28 and 5.

³⁴*Ibid.*, p. 24.

³⁵The ransom dealers in Tunis usually demanded 20–22 per cent interest, see Fontenay, "Le Maghreb barbaresque," 27.

well.³⁶ The same conclusion can be drawn from a deal between a Turk from Karamürsel, a certain Mehmed *reis*, and the French consul in İzmir. In mid-May 1626 Mehmed handed 300 *guruş* to the consul for the release of Hüseyin bin Hasan, a native of his town. On top of this he paid 30 *guruş* as *ücret-i kadem*.³⁷ The consul undertook to advance for the safe conduct and the passage, which would subsequently be paid back by Mehmed *reis*. One month later the captive in question was given 525 1/4 *riyal guruş* by the Maltese business associates of the consul. At first sight this would mean that he received an extra 225 1/4 *guruş* on top of his ransom.³⁸ If, in the only known case, 54 *guruş* were sufficient to cover the price of the safe conduct and the passage, then 225 *guruş* would seem exorbitant for the same purpose. It can therefore be presumed that both in this particular case and in the other ones, the consul and his partners demanded high interest for their assistance, which was concealed and the captives at their mercy were compelled to acknowledge the receipt of sums containing the interest as well.³⁹ This would also explain why the amount of ransom was so high.⁴⁰

³⁶Bibliothèque nationale de Paris, Département des manuscrits, manuscrits orientaux, fonds turc. 1234, p. 18.

³⁷The meaning of this term is not clear; in Ottoman documents it mainly refers to a fee taken by various Ottoman (predominantly legal) officials (*kadis*, *naibs*, and *kassams*, etc). Cf. Said Öztürk, *Askeri kassama ait onyedinci asır İstanbul tereke defterleri (sosyo-ekonomik tahlil)*. İstanbul, 1995, 76, 80. In our case it can be taken for certain that it denotes the mediator's commission due to the consul.

³⁸Bibliothèque nationale de Paris, Département des manuscrits, manuscrits orientaux, fonds turc. 1234, pp. 12, 22, 36.

³⁹This practice seems a little strange. Though Islamic law in principle prohibited taking interest, in the Ottoman Empire even the religious establishment regarded it as a routine affair to lend money at an annual interest of 20 per cent. Thus one may suspect the business partnership of having demanded a much higher interest than was usual in the Empire. For the Islamic prescriptions concerning interest, see Joseph Schacht, *Introduction au droit musulman*. Traduit de l'anglais par Paul Kemp et Abdel Magid Turki. Paris, 1999, 124. On the Ottoman practice, see Ronald C. Jennings, "Loans and Credit in Early 17th Century Ottoman Judicial Records. The Sharia Court of Anatolian Kayseri," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 16:2–3 (1973) 168–216, esp. 183–187.

⁴⁰For the prices on the Mediterranean slave markets and the amounts of ransom, see Jean Matthieux, "Trafic et prix de l'homme en Méditerranée aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles," *Annales* 9:2 (1954) 157–164. Maurice Aymard, "Chiourmes et galères dans la Méditerranée du XVI^e siècle," in *Mélanges en l'honneur de Fernand Braudel*. I. *Histoire*

The primary motive of the French consul's engagement in redemption was evidently financial gain. His first documented transaction was made in 1625, that is, before he was appointed consul. This indicates that he first started bringing Ottoman captives home as part of his business undertaking. On the other hand, as a consul he was in need of money from whatever source as he bought his office at an open auction for a significant sum from the French state. In addition, he received no regular salary so his expenses and investments were financed by duties, known as consulage (*konsolosluk hakkı*), he levied on the French traders.⁴¹

However, apart from personal interests, he may have been driven by national (political and commercial) motives as well. By the 1610s İzmir had become the major transit harbour on the east-west trade route, where the Venetians and French, who had previously dominated the Levantine trade, were in sharp competition with the English and Dutch for the raw material and markets of Western Anatolia. In the 1620s the development of the European buying up systems in the hinterland of İzmir was in full swing. Those who could maintain good contact with the local authorities could really become successful. Those, like the Venetians, who primarily expected protection from the central government, were facing increasing difficulties as from the beginning of the seventeenth century the court's power considerably weakened in the provinces. In these circumstances, it was in the best interest of the French consul, who was constantly at loggerheads with his own merchants and the French ambassador to Istanbul because of the levy and its distribution, to win the confidence and support of the local authorities. To this end, like other foreigners, he often lent money to the holders of tax-farm of the commercial and customs district of İzmir–Chios. As soon as he assumed his office, he lent 2,510 *guruş* to the Jewish tax-farmer Elkas Avraham so that the latter could send to Istanbul the amount demanded for the salary of the court

économique et sociale du monde méditerranéen, 1450–1650. Toulouse, 1973, 57–60. Fontenay, “L'Empire ottoman et le risque corsaire,” 196–197, 199. Idem, “Le Maghreb barbaresque,” 25–26, 34.

⁴¹Masson, *op. cit.*, 51–54, 77–95. *Histoire du commerce de Marseille*. Publié par la Chambre de Commerce de Marseille sous la direction de Gaston Rambert. Tome IV. De 1599 à 1660 par Louis Bergasse. De 1660 à 1789 par Gaston Rambert. Paris, 1954, 56–73. Niels Steensgaard, “Consuls and Nations in the Levant from 1570 to 1650,” *Scandinavian Economic History Review* 15:1–2 (1967) 30–31. Goffman, *op. cit.*, 97–98, 120.

mercenaries and for the yearly payment (*salyane*) of a *bey*.⁴² In 1629 he lent 1,500 *guruş* to an Armenian tax-farmer called Bedr, who, similarly to Avraham, promised to repay the sum by conveying a fixed part of the export-import duties to the consul.⁴³

In the competition for the patronage of the authorities, the French consul evidently gained additional moral and political prestige as a result of his assistance in the release of Ottoman captives. It is hardly surprising that the Maltese transactions occurred at the beginning of his term of office. He probably wanted to gain the goodwill of the municipal authorities and the people and thus consolidate his position. By doing this, he not only increased his freedom of action, but improved the reputation of the French nation as a whole as the Ottomans were aware that the French played a significant role in the Maltese kidnappings (probably this was the reason for the French ambassador to Istanbul to participate in the Maltese–Ottoman exchange of captives in 1590–1592.) Therefore the entire redemptionist activity of the French consul had an element of irony as the situation which he turned to his own and his merchants' financial and moral advantage was mainly the result of the banditry of his fellow countrymen on the Mediterranean.

⁴²Bibliothèque nationale de Paris, Département des manuscrits, manuscrits orientaux, fonds turc. 1234, p. 10. Dupuy lent Avraham money later on as well, but after the latter's death (1635) he had difficulties in recovering his loan. Cf. Goffman, *op. cit.*, 127–128.

⁴³Bibliothèque nationale de Paris, Département des manuscrits, manuscrits orientaux, fonds turc. 1234, p. 6.

APPENDIX

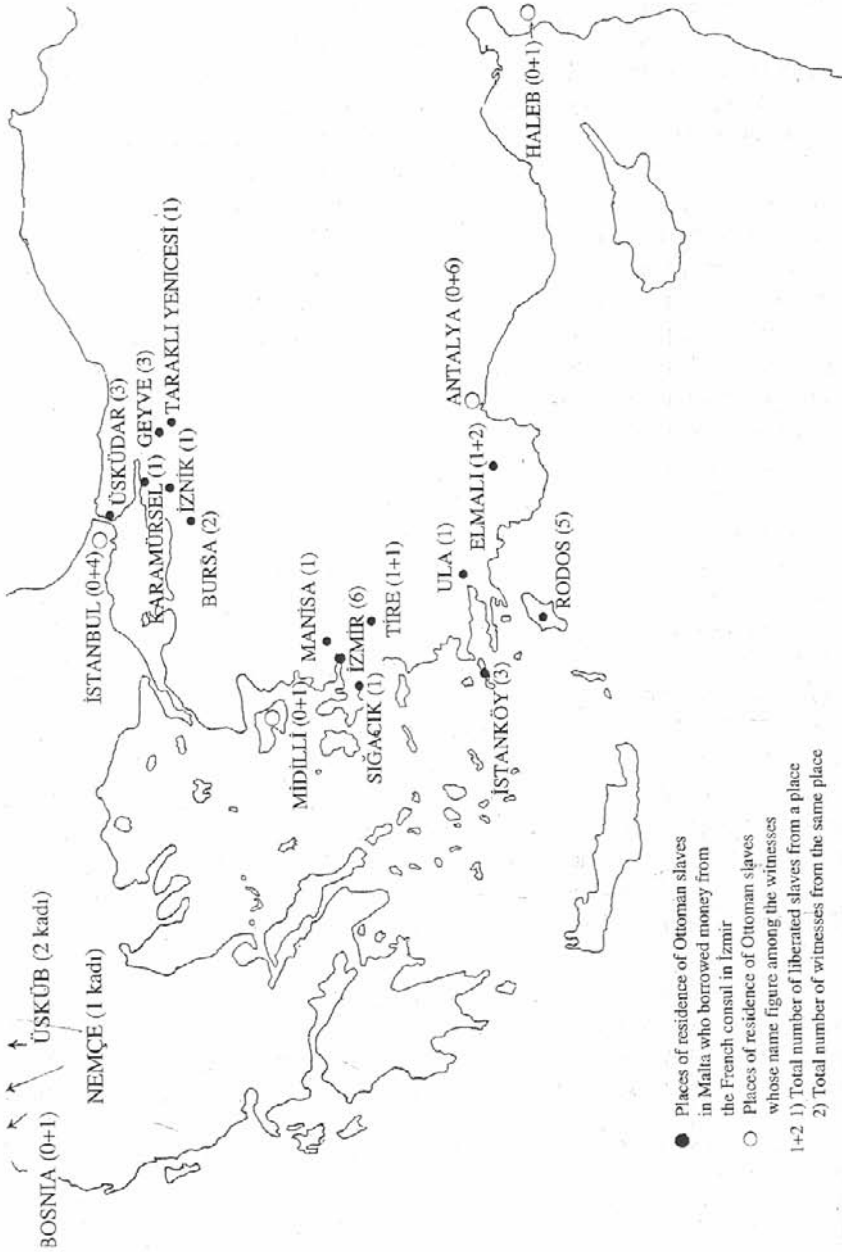
List of Ottoman slaves who were either released from Maltese captivity or received funds with the assistance of the French consul in İzmir and two Maltese merchants, and the amount of their ransom (June 7, 1625 – November 19, 1628)

(In the case of slaves marked by an asterisk, the merchants only forwarded the money sent by relatives and friends)

Name and place of origin	Ransom (<i>baha</i>)	Gate-duty (<i>kapu hakkı</i>) and passage charge (<i>gemi or sefine kirası</i>)
1. Bostan bin Yunus, Elmalı	470 <i>riyal guruş</i>	Included in the ransom
2. Receb bin Zülfikar, Taraklı Yenicesi	200 <i>sikke-i hasene</i>	54 <i>riyal guruş</i>
3. Musli bin Abdurrahman, İstanköy	292 <i>riyal guruş</i>	Included in the ransom
4. Mehmed bin Yusuf, İzmir	230 $\frac{3}{4}$ <i>riyal guruş</i>	Included in the ransom
5. *Musli Dede bin Memi, ?	348 <i>riyal guruş</i>	Included in the ransom
6. *Hasan bin Veli, ?	560.5 <i>riyal guruş</i>	Included in the ransom
7. *Bali bin Süleyman, ?	348 <i>riyal guruş</i>	Included in the ransom
8. *Abdurrahman bin Mehmed, ?	163 $\frac{3}{4}$ <i>riyal guruş</i>	Included in the ransom
9. Emrullah bin Ali, Geyve	950 <i>riyal guruş</i> (for the 3 slaves)	Included in the ransom
10. Elhac İbrahim bin Şaban, Geyve	nos. 9, 10, 11 making a total of 1,425 <i>guruş</i> to be repaid)	
11. Abdulfettah bin Mahmud, Geyve		
12. Hasan bin Ahmed, İstanköy	275 $\frac{3}{4}$ <i>riyal guruş</i>	Included in the ransom
13. Hüseyin bin Hasan, Karamürsel	300 <i>riyal guruş</i> + 30 <i>guruş</i> for the consul as <i>ücret-i kadem</i>	Separate, but not known

Name and place of origin	Ransom (<i>baha</i>)	Gate-duty (<i>kapu hakkı</i>) and passage charge (<i>gemi or sefine kirası</i>)
13/a. Elhac Hüseyin bin Kurşun Hasan, Karamürsel	525 1/4 <i>riyal guruş</i>	Included in the ransom (probably: 225 1/4 <i>guruş</i>)
14. Mehmed bin Bali, İznik	429.5 <i>riyal guruş</i>	Included in the ransom
15. Elhac Abdi bin Yusuf, Tire	780.5 <i>riyal guruş</i>	Included in the ransom
16. Mehmed bin Turmuş, İstanköy	304 <i>riyal guruş</i>	Included in the ransom
17. Kavlı bin Elhac Musa, Manisa (?)	191 1/4 <i>riyal guruş</i>	Included in the ransom
18. Abd <i>reis</i> bin Mustafa, Üsküdar	2,000 3/4 <i>riyal guruş</i> (for the	Included in the ransom
19. Mehmed, son of Abd <i>reis</i>	3 slaves nos. 18,	
20. Ahmed, nephew of Abd <i>reis</i>	19, 20 together)	
21. Elhac Mustafa bin Demür, İzmir	519.5 <i>riyal guruş</i>	Included in the ransom
22. Musli bin Mahmud, İzmir	1,205.5 <i>riyal-i kebir</i> (for the 3	Included in the ransom
23. Ali bin Mahmud, İzmir	slaves nos. 22,	
24. İbrahim bin Nebi, İzmir	23, 24 together)	
25. Mustafa <i>çelebi</i> ibn Elhac Emrullah, Bursa	1,091.5 <i>riyal-i kebir</i>	Included in the ransom
26. Osman bin Kara Mehmed, Ula	438 3/4 <i>riyal-i kebir</i>	Included in the ransom
27. Ali bin Şaban, Rhodes	1,727.5 <i>riyal-i kebir</i> (for the	Included in the ransom
28. İvaz bin Seyami <i>çavuş</i> , Rhodes	4 slaves nos. 27, 28, 29, 30 together; they	
29. Ali bin Ramazan, Rhodes	stood surety for	
30. Hasan bin Mahmud, Rhodes	each other)	
31. Elhac Mustafa bin Elhac Mahmud, the village of Durbalı (Anatolia)	597 1/4 <i>riyal-i kebir</i>	Included in the ransom
32. İbrahim bin Elhac Hasan, Sığacık	407.5 <i>riyal-i kebir</i>	Included in the ransom

Name and place of origin	Ransom (<i>baha</i>)	Gate-duty (<i>kapu hakkı</i>) and passage charge (<i>gemi or sefine kirası</i>)
33. *The Jew İlyas veled-i Meyir, İzmir	100 <i>riyal guruş</i> (sent by his mother)	(Not yet released)
34.*The Jew Simo veled-i Yasef, Rhodes	100 <i>riyal guruş</i> (sent by a Jew from Tire)	(Not yet released)
35. *Ali <i>çelebi</i> bin Abdullatif, imam, Bursa	20 <i>riyal guruş</i> (sent by his mother)	(Not yet released)



- Places of residence of Ottoman slaves in Malta who borrowed money from the French consul in Izmir
 - Places of residence of Ottoman slaves whose name figure among the witnesses
- 1+2 1) Total number of liberated slaves from a place
2) Total number of witnesses from the same place

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(Abbreviations: B: Bulgarian; G: German; Gr: Greek; H: Hungarian; L: Latin; O: Ottoman; R: Rumanian; S: South Slav; Sl: Slovakian; Slov: Slovenian; U: Ukrainian)

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